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EXTRACTS
FROM
T H E W O R K S
OF
JOHN OWEN, D.D.

Some time Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge.

OF

COMMUNION WITH GOD, &c.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

Of the Fellowship which the Saints have with Jesus Christ.

OF that distinct communion which we have with the person of the Father, we have treated in the foregoing chapters ; we now proceed to the consideration of that which we have with the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Now the fellowship we have with the second Person, is with him as Mediator. And herein I shall do these two things : 1. Declare that we have such fellowship with the Son of God. 2. Shew wherein that fellowship or communion doth consist.

1. For the first, I shall only produce some few places of Scripture, 1 Cor. i. 9, “God is faithful, by whom we are called to the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is that whereto all the saints are called, even fellowship with Jesus Christ our Lord. We are called of God the Father, to communion with the Son as

our Lord. Rev. iii. 20, "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me." Certainly this is fellowship; Christ will sup with believers, he refreshes himself with his own graces in them. The Lord Christ is exceedingly delighted in tasting of the sweet fruits of the Spirit in the saints. Hence is that prayer of the spouse, that she may have something for his entertainment when he cometh to her, Cant. iv. 16, "Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out; let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." The souls of the saints are the garden of Jesus Christ. A garden for delight. He rejoices in them, "and he rejoices over them," Zeph. iii. 17. And a garden for fruit, yea, pleasant fruit, so he describes it, Cant. iv. 12—14; "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed; thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, camphire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, with all chief fruits." Whatever is sweet and delicious for taste, whatever savoury and odoriferous, whatever is useful and medicinal, is in this garden. There is all manner of spiritual refreshments of all kinds whatever, in the souls of the saints, for the Lord Jesus. On this account is the spouse so earnest in the prayer mentioned for an increase of these things, that her beloved may sup with her as he hath promised. "Awake, O north-wind," &c. Oh that the breathings and workings of the Spirit of all grace might stir up all his gifts and graces in me, that the Lord Jesus, the beloved of my soul, may have meet and acceptable entertainment from me!

The whole book of the Canticles is taken up in the description of the communion that is between the Lord Christ and his saints, and therefore it is very needless to take from thence particular instances thereof. I shall

only add that of Prov. ix. 1—5; “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars. She hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the highest places of the city: whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled.” The Lord Christ, the eternal wisdom of the Father, and who of God is made unto us, wisdom, erects a spiritual house, wherein he makes provision for the entertainment of those guests whom he so freely invites. His church is the house which he hath built on a perfect number of pillars, that it might have a stable foundation. His slain beasts, and mingled wine, wherewith his table is furnished, are those spiritual fat things of the gospel, which he hath prepared for those that come in upon his invitation. Surely to eat of this bread, and drink of this wine, which he hath so graciously prepared, is to hold fellowship with him; for in what way or things is there nearer communion than in such?

I might farther evince this truth, by a consideration of all the relations wherein Christ and his saints stand, which necessarily require that there be a communion between them, if we suppose they are faithful in those relations.

2. It next follows, that we shew wherein it is that believers have this peculiar communion with him. Now this is in grace. This is every where ascribed to him by the way of eminency, John i. 14, “He dwelt among us full of grace and truth:” grace in the truth and substance of it. All that went before was typical; in the truth and substance it comes only by Christ. “Grace and truth is by Jesus Christ,” ver. 17; “And of his fulness we receive, and grace for grace,” ver. 16; that is, we have communion with him in grace; we receive from him all manner of grace, and therein have fellowship with him. So likewise in that apostolical benediction, wherein the

communication of spiritual blessings from the several persons, is so exactly distinguished ; it is grace that is ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." Yea, Paul is so delighted with this, that he makes it his motto, and the token whereby he would have his epistles known, 2 Thess. iii. 17, 18. "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, so I write ; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Yea, he makes these two, "Grace be with you," and the "Lord Jesus be with you," equivalent expressions ; for whereas he affirmeth the one to be the *token* in all his epistles, yet sometimes he useth the one only, sometimes the other, and sometimes both together. This then is that which we are peculiarly to eye in the Lord Jesus, to receive it from him, even grace, gospel-grace, revealed in, or exhibited by the gospel.

Grace is a word of various acceptations. In its most eminent significations it may be referred to three heads : 1. Grace of personal presence and comeliness. So we say, a graceful and comely person, either from himself or his ornaments. This in Christ is the subject of near one half of the book of Canticles ; it is also mentioned Psal. xlv. 2, "Thou art fairer than the children of men ; grace is poured into thy lips." 2. Grace of free favour and acceptance. By this "grace we are saved ;" that is, the free favour and gracious acceptance of God in Christ. In this sense is it used in that frequent expression, "If I have found grace in thy sight ; that is, If I be freely and favourably accepted before thee. 3. The fruits of the Spirit, sanctifying and renewing our natures, enabling unto good, and preventing from evil. Thus the Lord tells Paul, his "grace was sufficient for him ;" that is, the assistance against temptation. Let us begin with the first, and both shew what it is, and how the saints hold immediate communion with him therein.

1. What it is. I speak of the graces of the person of Christ, as he is vested with the office of mediation, his

spiritual eminency, comeliness, and beauty, as appointed by the Father unto this great work. Now in this respect the Scripture describes him as exceeding excellent, comely and desirable, far above comparison with the chiefest, choicest, created good, or any endearment imaginable. Psal. xlv. 2, "Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into thy lips." He is, beyond comparison, more beautiful and gracious than any here below, *יְפִיתָה Japhiapha*. The word is doubled to increase its significancy, and to exalt its subject beyond all comparison. "Thy fairness, O King Messiah," says the Chaldee Paraphrast, "is more excellent than the sons of men." Inward beauty and glory is here expressed by that of outward shape, form, and appearance; because that was so much esteemed in those who were to rule or govern, Isa. iv. 2. The prophet, terming him the "Branch of the Lord," and "the Fruit of the earth," affirms, that he shall be beautiful and glorious, excellent and comely; for in him dwelleth the fulness of the godhead bodily, Col. ii. 9.

Cantic. v. 9, the spouse is inquired of as to this very thing, even concerning the personal excellencies of the Lord Christ her beloved. "What is thy beloved," say the daughters of Jerusalem, "more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women; what is thy beloved more than another beloved?" And she returns this answer, ver. 10, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." And so proceedeth to a particular description of his excellencies, to the end of the chapter, and concludeth that "he is altogether lovely," ver. 16. Particularly he is here affirmed to be *white* and *ruddy*, a due mixture of which colours composes the most beautiful complexion. He is white in the glory of his Deity, and ruddy in the preciousness of his humanity. He is white in the beauty of his innocency and holiness, and ruddy in the blood of his oblation. "God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin," 2 Cor. v. 21. He who was white, became ruddy for our sakes, pouring out his

blood an oblation for sin. This also renders him graceful ; by his whiteness he fulfilled the law, by his redness he satisfied justice. His endearing excellency in the administration of his kingdom is hereby also expressed. He is white in love and mercy unto his own ; red with justice and vengeance towards his enemies, Isai. lxiii. 3, Rev. xix. 13.

There are three things in general, wherein this personal excellency and grace of Christ doth consist. 1. His fitness to save, from the grace of union, and the necessary effects thereof. 2. His fulness to save, from the grace of communion, or the free consequences of the grace of union. 3. His excellency to endear, from his complete suitableness to all the wants of the souls of men.

1. His fitness to save from his grace of union. The uniting of the natures of God and man in one person, made him fit to be a Saviour to the uttermost. He lays his hand upon God by partaking of his nature, and he lays his hand upon us by being partaker of our nature, and so becomes a day's-man, or umpire between both. By this means, he fills up all the distance that was made by sin between God and us ; and we who were "far off, are made nigh in him." Upon this account it was that he had room enough in his breast to receive, and power enough in his spirit to bear all the wrath that was prepared for us.

Union is the conjunction of the two natures of God and man in one person ; the necessary consequences whereof are—(1.) The subsistence of the human nature in the person of the Son of God. (2.) That communication of attributes in the person, whereby the properties of either nature are promiscuously spoken of the person of Christ, under what name soever, of God or man, he be spoken of, Acts xx. 28 ; iii. 21. (3.) The execution of his office of mediation in his single person in respect of both natures, wherein is to be considered the agent, Christ himself, God and man : he is the principle that

gives life and efficacy to the whole work. And then that which operates, which is both natures distinctly considered. As also the effectual working of each nature itself; and lastly, the effect produced, which ariseth from all, and relates to them all.

2. His fulness to save from the grace of communion, or the effects of his union, which are free, and consequences of it, and are all the furniture that he received from the Father by the union of the Spirit, for the work of our salvation. "He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him," Heb. vii. 26, having all fulness unto the end communicated unto him; for it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell," Col. i. 19. And he received not the Spirit by measure, John iii. 34; and from this fulness he makes out a suitable supply unto all that are his; "grace for grace," John i. 16; had it been given him by measure, we had exhausted it.

3. His excellency to endear, from his complete suitableness to all the wants of the souls of men. There is no man whatever, that hath any want in reference to the things of God, but Christ will be unto him that which he wants. Is he dead? Christ is life. Is he weak? Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Hath he the sense of guilt upon him? Christ is complete righteousness, "The Lord our righteousness." Many poor creatures are sensible of their wants, but know not where their remedy lies. Indeed; whether it be life, or light, power, or joy, all is wrapped up in him.

This then, for the present, may suffice in general to be spoken of the personal grace of the Lord Christ. He hath a fitness to save, having pity, and ability, tenderness and power to carry on that work to the uttermost; and a fulness to save, of redemption and sanctification, of righteousness and the Spirit; and a suitableness to the wants of all our souls, whereby he becomes exceeding desirable, yea, altogether lovely. And as to this, in the first place, have the saints distinct fellowship with the Lord Christ.

You that are yet in the flower of your days, full of health and strength, and with all the vigour of your spirits, pursue some one thing, some another, consider, I pray, what are all your beloveds to this beloved? What have you gotten by them? Let us see the peace, quietness, assurance of everlasting blessedness that they have given you. Their paths are crooked paths; whoever goes in them shall not know peace. Behold here a fit object for your choicest affections; one in whom you may find rest to your souls; one in whom there is nothing that will grieve and trouble you to eternity. Behold, he stands at the door of your souls and knocks: Oh, reject him not, lest you seek him and find him not. Study him a little; you love him not, because you know him not. Why doth one of you spend his time in idleness and folly, and wasting of precious time? Why doth another assemble himself with them that scoff at religion, and the things of God? Merely because you know not our Lord Jesus: Oh, when he shall reveal himself unto you, and tell you he is Jesus whom you have slighted and refused, how will it break your hearts, and make you mourn like a dove! And if you never come to know him, it had been better you had never been. Whilst it is called to-day, then, harden not your hearts.

The next thing that comes under consideration, is, the way whereby we hold communion with Christ, in respect of that personal grace. Now this the Scripture manifests to be by the way of a conjugal relation. He is married unto us, and we unto him; which spiritual relation is attended with suitable conjugal affections. And this gives us fellowship with him, as to his personal excellencies. This the spouse expresseth, Cant. ii. 16, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." He is *mine*, I possess him, I have interest in him, as my head, and my husband; and I am *his*, possessed of him, owned by him, given up unto him, and that as to my beloved in a conjugal relation. So Isa. liv. 5, "Thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name, and thy Redemer, the Holy

One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called.” This is given as the reason why the church shall not be ashamed in the midst of her troubles ; she is married unto her Maker, and her Redeemer is her husband.

To this purpose we have his faithful engagement, Hos. ii. 19, 20 ; “ I will (saith he) betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgments, and in loving kindness, and in mercies, I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness.” And it is the main design of the ministry of the gospel to prevail with men to give up themselves to the Lord Christ, as he reveals his kindness in this engagement. Hence Paul tells the Corinthians, 2 Epist. chap. xi. ver. 2, that he had “ espoused them unto one husband, that he might present them as a chaste virgin unto Christ.” For this he had prevailed upon them by the preaching of the gospel, that they should give up themselves as a virgin unto him who had betrothed them to himself, as an husband.

Thus he sets out his whole communion with his church under this allusion, and that most frequently. The time of his taking the church unto himself, is the day of his marriage, and the church is his bride, his wife, Rev. xix. 7, 8. The entertainment he makes for his saints, is a wedding-supper, Matt. xxii. 3. The graces of his church are the ornaments of his queen, Psa. xlv. 9—14. And the fellowship he hath with his saints, is as that which those who are mutually beloved in a conjugal relation hold, Cant. i. Hence Paul, in describing these two, makes sudden and insensible transitions from one to the other, Eph. v. from ver. 22, unto ver. 32, concluding the whole with an application unto Christ and the church.

It is now to be inquired in the next place, how it is that we hold communion with the person of Christ, in respect of conjugal relations and affections. Now herein there are some things that are common to Christ and the saints, and some things that are peculiar to each. The whole may be reduced to these two heads. 1. A mutual resig-

nation of themselves one to the other. 2. Mutual conjugal affections.

1. There is a mutual resignation, or making over of their persons, one to another. This is the first act of communion, as to the personal grace of Christ. Christ makes himself over to the believer to be his, as to all the love, care, and tenderness of an husband; and the believer gives up himself wholly unto the Lord Christ, to be his, as to all loving, tender obedience. And herein is the principal matter of Christ and the saints' espousals. This in the prophet is set out under a parable of himself and an harlot, Hos. iii. 3, "Thou shalt abide for me," saith he unto her, "thou shalt not be for another, and I will be for thee." Poor harlot, saith the Lord Christ, I have bought thee unto myself with the price of mine own blood, and now this is that which we will consent unto, I will be for thee, and thou shalt be for me, and not for another.

(1.) Christ gives himself to the soul with all his excellencies, righteousness, graces, to be its Saviour, head, and husband for ever. He looks upon the souls of his saints, loves them well, and counts them fair and beautiful, because he hath made them so. Cant. i. 15, "Behold thou art fair, my companion, behold thou art fair, thou hast doves' eyes." Let others think what they please, Christ redoubles it, that the souls of his saints are very beautiful, even perfect through his comeliness which he puts upon them, Ezek. xvi. 14; "Behold thou art fair, thou art fair;" particularly that their spiritual light is very excellent and glorious, like the eyes of a dove, tender, discerning, clear, and shining. Therefore he adds that pathetic wish of the enjoyment of this his spouse, chap. ii. 14, "O my dove," saith he, "that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Do not hide thyself as one that flies to the clefts of the rocks, be not dejected as one that hides herself behind the stairs,

and is afraid to come forth to the company that inquires for her. Let not thy spirit be cast down at the weakness of thy supplications ; let me yet hear thy sighs and groans, thy breathings and pantings to me, they are very sweet, very delightful, and thy spiritual countenance, thy appearance in heavenly things, is comely and delightful to me. This is the first thing on the part of Christ, the free bestowing of himself upon us to be our Christ, our beloved, as to all the purposes of love, mercy, grace, and glory, whereto in his mediation he is designed, in a marriage covenant, never to be broken. This is the sum. The Lord Jesus Christ fitted and prepared as Mediator, to be an husband to his church, tenders himself in the promises of the gospel to them in all his desirableness, convinces them of his good-will towards them, and his all-sufficiency for a supply of their wants, and upon their consent to accept of him, which is all he requires at their hands, engageth himself in a marriage covenant to be theirs for ever.

(2.) On the part of the saints. It is their free, willing, consent to receive and submit to the Lord Jesus, as their husband, Lord, and Saviour, to abide with him, subject their souls unto him, and to be ruled by him for ever. Now this in the soul, is either initial, or the solemn consent at the first entrance of union, or consequential in renewed acts of consent all our days. I speak of it especially in this latter sense, wherein it is proper to communion, not in the former, wherein it primarily intendeth union.

There are two things that complete this self-resignation of the soul. 1. The liking of Christ for his excellency, grace, and suitableness, far above all other beloveds whatever, preferring him in the judgment and mind, above them all. And this is the soul's entrance into conjugal communion with Christ as to personal grace, the constant preferring him above all pretenders to its affections, counting all loss and dung in comparison of

him. Beloved peace, beloved natural relations, beloved wisdom and learning, beloved righteousness, beloved duties, all loss compared with Christ. 2. The accepting of Christ by the will, as its only husband, Lord, and Saviour. This is called receiving of Christ, John i. 12, and is not intended only for that solemn act, whereby at first entrance we close with him, but also for the constant frame of the soul in abiding with him, and owning of him as such. When the believer consents to take Christ on his own terms, to save him in his own way, and says, Lord, I would have had thee and salvation in my way, that it might have been partly of mine endeavours, and as it were by the works of the law, I am now willing to receive thee and to be saved in thy way, merely by grace ; and though I would have walked according to my own mind, yet now I wholly give up myself to be ruled by thy Spirit, for in thee have I righteousness and strength, then doth it carry on communion with Christ as to the grace of his person. This it is to receive the Lord Jesus in his comeliness and eminency. Let believers exercise their hearts abundantly unto this thing. This is choice communion with the Son, Jesus Christ. Let us receive him in all his excellencies as he bestows himself upon us. Be frequent in comparing him with other beloveds ; sin, the world, legal righteousness, and preferring him before them, counting them all loss and dung in comparison of him. And let our souls be persuaded of his sincerity and willingness in giving himself, in all that he is, as Mediator, unto us, to be ours ; and let our hearts give up themselves unto him ; let us tell him, that we will be for him, and not for another ; let him know it from us, he delights to hear it ; yea, he says, sweet is our voice, and our countenance is comely, and we shall not fail of sweet refreshment with him.

CHAP. II.

Of Communion with Christ in a conjugal Relation in Respect of Affections.

The communion begun, as before declared, between Christ and the soul, is in the next place carried on by suitable affections; Christ having given himself to the soul, loves the soul; and the soul having given itself to Christ, loveth him also. Christ loves his own, yea, he loves them to the end, and the saints love Christ, they love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Now the love of Christ to his saints consists in these four things. 1. Delight. 2. Valuation. 3. Compassion. 4. Bounty. And the love of the saints to Christ may be referred to these four things. 1. Delight. 2. Valuation. 3. Chastity. 4. Duty. Two of these are of the same kind; and two distinct, as is required in this relation.

1. The first thing on the part of Christ is delight. Delight is the flowing of love. Now Christ delights exceedingly in his saints; "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee," Isa. lxii. 5. Hence he calleth the day of his espousals, the day "of the gladness of his heart," Cant. iii. 11. It is known that usually this is the most unmixed delight that the sons of men are in their pilgrimage made partakers of. The delight of the bridegroom in the day of his espousals is the height of what an expression of delight can be carried to. This is in Christ answerable to the relation he takes us into. His heart is glad in us, without sorrow. And every day whilst we live is his wedding-day. (1.) To manifest his delight in his saints, he communicates his secrets to them. He gives them to know his person, his excellencies, his grace, his love, his kingdom, his will, the riches of his goodness, and the bowels of his mercy more and more, when the world shall neither see nor know any such thing. (2.) He enables

his saints to communicate their mind, to reveal their souls unto him, that so they may walk together as intimate friends; Christ knows the mind of all. "He knows what is in man, and needs not that any man testify of him," John ii. 25. "He searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of all," Rev. ii. 23. But all know not how to communicate their mind to Christ. It will not avail a man at all, that Christ knows his mind, for so he doth of every one whether he will or not, but that a man can make his heart known unto Christ, this is consolation.

Hereto is required, 1. Assistance for the work, for of ourselves we cannot do it. And this the saints have by the spirit of Jesus, Rom. viii. 26; "Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." All endeavours, all attempts for communion with God, without the supplies of the spirit of supplication, without his effectual working in the heart, is of no value, nor to any purpose. And this opening of our hearts to the Lord Jesus is that wherein he is exceedingly delighted. Hence is that affectionate call of his unto us, to be treating with him on this account, chap. ii. 14; "O my dove, that art in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." When the soul on any account is driven to hide itself in any neglected condition, in the most unlikely place of abode, then doth he call for this communication of itself by prayer to him, for which he gives the assistance of the Spirit.

2. A way whereby to approach unto God with our desires. This also we have by him provided for us, John xiv. 5, 6; "Thomas saith unto Jesus, Lord we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way? Jesus said unto him, I am the way; no man cometh unto

the Father but by me." That way which we had of going to God at our creation, is quite shut up by sin. The sword of the law which hath fire put into it by sin, turns every way to stop all passages unto God. Jesus Christ hath "consecrated a new and living way," (for the saints) "through the veil, that is to say his flesh," Heb. x. 20. He hath consecrated and set it apart for believers, and for them alone. Others pretend to go to God with their prayers, but they come not nigh him. How can they possibly come to the end, who go not in the way? Christ only is the way to the throne of grace, none comes to God but by him.

3. Boldness to go unto God. Such is the glory and terror of the Lord, such the infinite perfection of his holiness, that on clear sight of it, it will make the soul conclude, of itself, it cannot serve him, nor will it be to any advantage once to draw nigh to him. It is in Christ alone, and on the account of his oblation and intercession, that we have any boldness to approach unto him. And these three advantages have the saints of communicating their minds unto the Lord Christ, which he hath appointed for them because he delights in them.

In return hereto, for the carrying on of the communion between them, the saints delight in Christ, he is their joy, their crown, their life; food, health, strength, desire, righteousness, salvation, without him they have nothing, in him they find all things. "God forbid that I should rejoice, save in the cross of Christ." He hath from the foundation of the world been the hope, expectation, desire, and delight of all believers. Hence Haggai ii. 7, he is called "the desire of all nations," the person whom their souls love and delight in, desire and long after. So is the saints' delight in him made a description of him by way of eminence, Mal. iii. 1, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in." He whom ye seek, whom you delight in, is the description of Christ, he is their delight and desirable one, the person of their desire.

In that pattern of communion with Jesus Christ which we have in the Canticles, this is abundantly insisted on. The spouse tells us, that she sits under his shadow with great delight, ch. ii. 3. And this delight she manifests several ways, wherein we should labour to find our hearts in like manner affected towards him.

1. By her exceeding great care to keep his company when once she had obtained it, ch. ii. 7 ; “I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my beloved until he please.” Having obtained sweet communion with Christ, described in the verses foregoing, here she expresseth her delight in it, and desire of the continuance of it, and therefore following on the allusion formerly insisted on, she speaks as one would do to her companion, that had rest with one she loved, I charge you by all that is dear to you, by the things you most delight in, which among the creatures are most lovely, all the pleasant and desirable things that you can think of, that you disturb him not. The sum of her aim and desire is, that nothing may fall out, nothing of sin or provocation happen that may occasion Christ to depart from her. A believer that hath gotten Christ in his arms, is like one that hath found great spoil. He looks about him every way, and fears every thing, that may deprive him of it. Riches make men watchful ; and the actual sensible possession of him, in whom are all the riches and treasures of God, will make men look about them for the keeping of him. The line of choicest communion is a line of the greatest spiritual solicitousness : carelessness, in the enjoyment of Christ pretended, is a manifest evidence of a false heart.

2. The spouse manifests her delight in him, by her impatience of his absence, with desires still of nearer communion with him, ch. viii. 6 ; “ Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.” The

allusion is doubtless from the high-priest of the Jews, in his spiritual representation of the church before God. He had a breast-place, which he is said to wear on his heart, wherein the names of the children of Israel were engraven after the manner of seals or signets ; he had the like upon his shoulder, or on his arms, both representing the priesthood of Christ, who bears the names of all his, before his Father, in the holy of holies. Now the seal on the heart is near, inward, tender love, which gives an impression on the heart of the thing so loved. " Set me," saith the spouse, " as a seal upon thine heart ;" let me be constantly fixed in thy most tender and affectionate love ; let me always have a place in thine heart, let me have an engraving, a mighty impression upon thine heart, that shall never be obliterated. The soul is never satisfied with thoughts of Christ's love to it. Oh that it were more, that I were as a seal on his heart, is its language ! She adds, " Set me as a seal upon thine arm ;" the heart is the fountain, but close and hidden ; the arm is manifestation and power. Let, saith the spouse, thy love be manifested to me in thy tender and powerful protection of me. Two things are evident in this request ; the continual mindfulness of Christ of the soul, as having its condition still in his eye, engraven on his arm, with the exalting of his power for the preservation of it, suitable to the love of his heart unto it, and the hidden love and care of Christ made visible on his arm, or evident by the fruits of it. This is that which she would be assured of ; and without a sense whereof, there is no rest to be obtained. The reason she gives of this earnestness, is that which principally evinces her delight in him. " Love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave." I am not able to bear the workings of my love to thee ; unless I may always have fellowship with thee ; there is no satisfying of my love without it. It is as the grave that still says, Give, give ! Death is not satisfied without its prey ; if it hath not all, it will have nothing ; let what will happen, if death hath not its

whole desire, it hath nothing at all. Nor can it be withstood in its appointed season. No ransom will be taken. So is my love, if I have thee not wholly, I have nothing, nor can all the world bribe it to a diversion, it will be no more turned aside than death in its time. Also I am not able to bear my jealous thoughts ; I fear thou dost not love me, that thou hast forsaken me, because I know I deserve not to be beloved. If I find not myself on thy heart and arm, I am as one that lies down on a bed of coals.

3. She further manifests this by her solicitousness, trouble, and perplexity, in his loss and withdrawing. This state of the spouse is discovered, chap. iii. 1, 2, 3 ; “ By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loved, I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad-ways, I will seek him whom my soul loveth ; I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me ; to whom I said, Saw you him whom my soul loveth ? ” It is night now with the souls, a time of darkness and affliction. He is the sun ; if he go down upon them, if his beams be eclipsed, if in his light they see no light, it is all darkness with them. The absence of Christ will make it night, dark as darkness itself, in the midst of all other consolations. But is the believer contented with this dispensation ? He is upon his bed ; that is, of ease ; but in the greatest peace and opportunity of ease and rest, he finds none in the absence of Christ ; though he be on his bed, having nothing to disquiet him, he rests not, if Christ his rest be not there. She sought him. This hath two parts, searching our own souls for the cause of his absence ; and searching the promises for his presence.

(1.) The soul finding not Christ present in his wonted manner, warming, cherishing, reviving it with love, presently inquires into the cause of all this, calls itself to an account, what it hath done, how it hath behaved that it is not with it as at other times ; that Christ hath with-

drawn himself, and is not nigh to it in the wonted manner. Here it accomplisheth a diligent search. It considers the love, tenderness, and kindness of the Lord Jesus ; what delight he takes in abiding with his saints, so that his departure is not without cause. How, saith it, have I demeaned myself, that I have lost my beloved ? Where have I been wandering after other lovers ? And when the miscarriage is found out, it abounds in revenge and indignation.

(2.) Having driven this to some issue, the soul applieth itself to the promises of the covenant, wherin Christ is most graciously exhibited unto it, considers one, ponders another, to find a taste of him. It considers diligently if it can see the delightful countenance of Christ in them ; but if it find nothing but the carcass, the bare letter in the promise, this amazeth the soul, and it knows not what to do. As a man that hath a jewel of great price, lays it aside, as he supposes, in a safe place ; in an agony and extremity of want going to seek for his jewel, he finds it not in the place he expected, and is filled with amazement, and knows not what to do ; so it is with this pearl of the gospel ; after a man hath sold all that he hath for it, and hath enjoyed it for a season, then to have it missing at a time of need, it must needs perplex him. So was it with the spouse here ; “ I sought him,” saith she, “ but I found him not.”

But what does she now do ? Does she give over and search no more ? Nay, but says she, ver. 2, “ I will arise,” I will not so give over, I must have Christ, or die. 1. She resolves to put herself upon another course, a more vigorous inquest ; I will arise and make use of other means besides those of private prayer, meditation, self-searching, and inquiring into the promises. It implies, First, Resolution, and a zealous, violent casting off that frame, wherein she had lost her love. “ I will arise,” I will not rest in this frame. I am undone if I do. So sometimes God calls his church to arise and “ shake itself

out of the dust." Secondly, Diligence; I will now take another course, I will leave no way unattempted. This is the condition of a soul, that finds not the wonted presence of Christ in its private inquiries. Dull in prayer, wandering in meditations, rare in thoughts of him! I will not bear this frame, whatever way God hath appointed I will vigorously pursue, until I find my beloved.

2. The way she puts herself upon, is to go about the city. Not to insist upon particulars, the city here intended is the city of God, the church, and the passing through the broad and narrow streets, is the diligent inquiry, that the spouse makes in all the paths and ordinances of it. This then is the next thing the soul addresses itself to; when it finds him not in any private endeavours, it makes vigorous application to publick worship, prayer, preaching, administration of the seals. Indeed the great inquiry the souls of believers make in every ordinance is after Christ. So much as they find of him, so much refreshment have they, and no more: especially when under any desertion they rise up to this inquiry. They listen to every word, to every prayer, to find if any thing of Christ appears to them. Oh that Christ would at length meet me in this or that sermon, and recover my poor heart to some sight of his love! The solicitousness of a believer, when he finds not Christ's presence, as in former days, is indeed inexpressible; much of the frame of such a heart is couched in the redoubling of the expression, "I sought him, I sought him;" setting out an inconceivable passion, and suitably industrious desire. Thus being disappointed at home, the spouse proceeds. But see the event; she sought him, but found him not. It doth sometimes so fall out. What now follows in this estate? ver. 3, "The watchmen found me," &c. That these watchmen of the city of God are the watchmen and officers of the church, is confessed, and it is of sad consideration that the Holy Ghost doth sometimes in this book take notice of them on no good account, plainly, chap. v. 7, they turn persecutors.

It was Luther's saying, "Nunquam periclitatur religio, nisi inter reverendissimos."* Here they are of a more gentle temper, and seeing the poor disconsolate soul, seem to take notice of her condition. All these labourings in his absence sufficiently discover the soul's delight in the presence of Christ. Go one step farther to the discovery that is made of him once again, and it will yet be more evident, ver. 4, 5, "It was but a little while that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go."

It often so falls out, when private and publick means fail, and the soul hath nothing left but waiting silently and walking humbly, Christ appears, that his so doing may be evidently of grace. Let us not at any time give over in this condition. When all ways are past, the summer and harvest are gone without relief, when neither bed nor watchmen can assist; let us wait a little, and we shall see the salvation of God. Christ honours his immediate actings sometimes; though ordinarily he crowns his ordinances. Christ often manifests himself immediately, and out of ordinances, to them that wait for him in them. That he will do so to them that despise them, I know not. Let us wait as he hath appointed; let him appear as he pleaseth. How she deals with him when found is next declared. She "held him, and would not let him go," &c. They are all expressions of the greatest delight imaginable. The sum is, having at length come once more to sweet communion with Christ, the soul lays fast hold on him by faith, refuses to part with him any more in vehemency of love; tries to keep him in ordinances, in the house of its mother, the church of God, and so uses all means for confirming the mutual love between Christ and her, all the expressions, all the allusions used, evidencing delight to the utmost capacity of the soul. Let the hearts of those that are acquainted

* Religion is never in danger unless among the most reverend.

with these things, be allowed to make the close. What is it they long for? they rejoice in? What is it that satisfies them to the utmost, and gives sweet complacency to their spirits in every condition? What is it whose loss they fear, whose absence they cannot bear? Is it not this their beloved, and he alone? This also they further manifest by their delight in every thing that belongs to Christ. This is an evidence of delight, when for his sake whom we delight in, we also delight in every thing that belongs to him. Christ's great interest in this world lies in his people and his ordinances; his household, and their provision; now in both these do the saints exceedingly delight for his sake.

And this is the first act of conjugal affections in this communion between Christ and believers. He delights in them, and they delight in him; he delights in their prosperity; they delight in his honour, and in his presence; for his sake they delight in his servants, (though by the world contemned,) as the most excellent in the world; and in his ordinances, as the wisdom of God, which are foolishness to the world.

CHAP. III.

Other consequential Affections.

Christ values his believers: which is the second branch of that conjugal affection he bears towards them. I shall not need to insist long on this. Heaven and earth are full of evidences of it. Some few considerations will give life to the assertion. Consider them then, either absolutely: or, in respect of others; and you will see what a valuation he puts upon them.

I. Absolutely, all that ever he did or doth, all that ever he underwent, or suffered as Mediator, was for their sakes. Now these things were so great and grievous, that if he had not esteemed them above all that can be

expressed, he would never have engaged to their performance and undergoing. Take a few instances :

(1.) For their sakes was he made flesh ; manifested in the flesh, Heb. ii. 14, "Whereas therefore the children partook of flesh and blood, even he in like manner partook of the same," and the height of this valuation of them the apostle aggravates, ver. 16, "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He had no such esteem for angels.

(2.) For their sakes he was so made flesh, that there was an emptying of himself, an eclipsing of his glory, a becoming poor for them, 2 Cor. viii. 9, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich, for us he became poor." Being rich in eternal glory with his Father, he became poor for believers. The same person that was rich was also poor. That the riches here meant can be none but those of the Deity, is evident by its opposition to the poverty which as man he undertook.

(3.) For their sakes he so humbled and emptied himself in taking flesh, as to become therein a servant ; account all that he did and suffered in his life comes under this consideration. All which may be referred to these three heads. First, Fulfilling all righteousness. Secondly, Enduring all manner of persecutions and hardships. Thirdly, Doing all manner of good to men. He took on him for their sakes, a life of prayers, tears, fears, obedience, suffering, and all this with cheerfulness and delight, calling his employment "his meat and drink," and still professing that the law of this obedience was in his heart, that he was content to do this will of God.

(4.) He stays not here, but for the consummation of all that went before, for their sakes he becomes obedient to death, the death of the cross, so he professeth to his Father, John xvii. 19, "For their sakes I sanctify myself; I dedicate myself as an offering, as a sacrifice to be killed and slain." This was his aim in all the former, that he might die. He was born and lived that he might die. He valued them above his life. And if we might stay to

consider a little what was in his death that he underwent for them, we should perceive what a price indeed he put upon them. The curse of the law was in it, the wrath of God was in it, the loss of God's presence was in it. It was a fearful cup that he tasted of, and drank of, that they might never taste of it. A man would not for ten thousand worlds undergo that which Christ underwent for us in that one thing of desertion from God, were it attended with no more distress but what a mere creature might possibly emerge from. And what thoughts we should have of this himself tells us, John xv. 13, "Greater love hath none than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." It is impossible there should be any greater demonstration of love than this; what can any one do more? And yet he tells us in another place, that it hath heightening, Rom. v. 8, "God commendeth his love to us, in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us." When he did this for us we were sinners, and enemies whom he might justly have destroyed. What can more be done? to die for us when we were sinners? Such a death, in such a manner, with such attendances of wrath and curse; a death accompanied with the worst that God had ever threatened to sinners, argues as high a valuation of us, as the heart of Christ himself was capable of. For one to part with his glory, his riches, his ease, his life, his love from God, to undergo loss, shame, wrath, curse, death for another, is an evidence of a dear valuation. Certainly Christ had a dear esteem of them, that, rather than they should perish, he would part with all. There would be no end should I go through all the instances of Christ's valuation of believers in all their deliverances, afflictions, in all conditions of sinning and suffering, what he hath done, what he doth in his intercession, what he delivers them from, what he procures for them; all telling out this one thing, they are the apple of his eye, his jewel, his diadem, his crown.

2. In comparison of others. All the world is nothing to him in comparison of believers. They are his garden;

the rest of the world a wilderness, Cant. iv. 12, "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." They are his inheritance, the rest his enemies. So Isaiah xliii. 3, 4, "I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour; I gave Egypt for thy ransom, AEthiopia and Seba for thee; since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." Indeed he disposeth of all nations and their interest according as is for the good of believers, Amos ix. 9. In all the siftings of the nations, the eye of God is upon the house of Israel. Look to heaven, "Angels are appointed to minister for them," Heb. i. 14. Look into the world; the nations in general are either blessed for their sakes, or destroyed on their account. On this account are the pillars of the earth borne up, and patience is exercised towards the perishing world. In a word, there is not the meanest, the weakest, the poorest believer on the earth, but Christ prizeth him more than all the world besides; were our hearts filled much with thoughts hereof, it would tend much to our consolation.

To answer this, believers also value Jesus Christ; they have an esteem for him above all the world, and all things in the world. They say of him in their hearts continually as David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and whom in earth that I desire besides thee," Psalm lxxiii. 35. Neither heaven nor earth will yield them an object any way comparable to him.

1. They value him above all other things and persons. Christ and a dungeon, Christ and a cross, is infinitely sweeter than a crown, a sceptre without him. So was it with Moses, Heb. xi. 26, "He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." The reproach of Christ is the worst consequent that the wickedness of the world can bring upon the followers of him. The treasures of Egypt were in those days the greatest in the world. Moses despised the very best of

the world, for the worst of the cross of Christ. Indeed himself hath told believers, that if they love any thing better than him, they are not worthy of him. A despising of all things for Christ, is the very first lesson of the gospel. “Forsake all, take up the cross, and follow me,” was the way whereby he tried his disciples of old ; and if there be not the same mind and heart in us, we are none of his.

2. They value him above their lives, Acts xx. 24, “ My life is not dear, that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus.” Let life and all go, so that I may serve him ; and when all is done, enjoy him, and be made like to him. All is welcome that comes from him, or for him. The lives they have to live, the death they have to die, are light, compared with him who is the stay of their lives, and the end of their death. Were it not for the refreshment which they daily receive by him, they could not live ; their lives would be a burden, and the thoughts of enjoying him make them cry with Paul, “ Oh ! that we were dissolved.” The accounts of the martyrs of old, and of late, the neglect of life in women and children, the contempt of torments whilst his name sweetened all, have rendered this truth clear to men and angels.

3. They value him above all spiritual excellencies and all other righteousness whatever, Phil. iii. 7, 8, “ Those things which were advantage to me, I esteemed loss for Christ. Yea, also I account all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things, and do esteem them common, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him.” Having recounted the excellencies which he had, and the privileges which he enjoyed in his Judaism, which were all of a spiritual nature, and a participation wherein made the rest of his countrymen despise all the world, and look upon themselves as the only acceptable persons with God, the apostle tells us what was his esteem of them in comparison of the Lord Jesus ; they were dross and dung.

Whereas he had for many years been seeking after a righteousness by the works of the law, instantly serving God day and night to obtain the promise; living in all good conscience from his youth, now he willingly cast away all these things, and could not only be contented to be without them, but as for that end for which he had sought after them, he abhorred them all. All goes for Christ; all righteousness without him, all ways of religion, all goes for that one pearl. The glory of his Deity, the excellency of his person, his all-conquering desirableness, ineffable love, wonderful undertaking, unspeakable condescensions, effectual mediation, complete righteousness, lie in their eye, ravish their hearts, fill their affections, and possess their souls. And this is the second mutual conjugal affection between Christ and believers.

The third conjugal affection on the part of Christ, is pity and compassion. As a man "nourisheth and cherisheth his own flesh, so doth the Lord his church," Ephes. v. 29. Christ hath a fellow-feeling with his saints in all their troubles, as a man hath with his own flesh. This act of the conjugal love of Christ relates to the many trials that his saints meet with here below. He doth not deal with believers as the Samaritans with the Jews, that fawned on them in their prosperity, but despised them in their trouble. He is like a tender father, who though perhaps he loves all his children alike, yet will take most pains with one that is sick and weak, though he may be most froward, and as it should seem hardest to be borne with. And, which is more than the pity of any father can extend to, he himself suffers with them, and shares in all their troubles.

These sufferings may be referred to two heads:— Temptations and afflictions.

1. Temptations by their own infirmities, as also from their adversaries without. The frame of the heart of Christ, and his deportment towards them in this condition, you have Heb. iv. 15; "We have not an High-Priest which cannot be touched with our infirmities."

We have not such an one as cannot. The two negations do vehemently affirm, that we have such an High-Priest as is touched. The word *touched* comes exceedingly short of expressing the original word ; it is *συμαδνοαι*, to *suffer together*. We have, saith the apostle, such an High-Priest as doth suffer with us, endure our infirmities. And in what respect he suffers with us in regard of our infirmities, he declares in the next words, for he was “tempted like unto us,” ver. 16. As to our infirmities, temptations, spiritual weakness ; therein, in particular, hath he a compassionate sympathy with us. Whatever be our infirmities, so far as they are our temptations, he doth sympathize with us under them. There are two ways of expressing a fellow-feeling and suffering with another : a friendly grieving, and a gracious supply ; both are eminent in Christ. First, he grieves and labours with us, Zech. i. 12, “The angel of the Lord answered and said, Oh Lord of Hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem !” He speaks as one intimately affected with the condition of poor Jerusalem, and therefore he hath bid all the world take notice, that what is done to them is done to him, chap. ii. 8, 9 ; yea, to the apple of his eye.

In the second he abounds, Isai. xl. 11, “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead them that are with young.” Yea, we have both here together tender compassion and assistance. The whole frame, wherein he is here described, is a frame of the greatest tenderness, compassion, and condescension that can be imagined. His people are set forth under many infirmities ; some are lambs, some great with young ; some very tender, some burdened with temptations ; nothing in any of them all strong or comely. To them all Christ is a Shepherd, that feeds his own sheep, and leads them out to pleasant pastures ; where, if he see a poor weak lamb, doth not thrust it on, but takes it into his bosom, where he both caseth and refresheth it. He

leads his sheep gently and tenderly. As did Jacob them that were burdened with young, so doth our Lord with his flock in the several ways wherein he leads them. When he sees a poor saint, weak, tender, halting, ready to sink, he takes him into his arms by some gracious promise administered to him, carries him, bears him up when he is not able to go one step forward.

So mention being made of his compassionateness and fellow-suffering with us, Heb. iv. 15, it is added, ver. 16, that he administers, *χαριν εἰς εὐκαιροὺς βοηθειῶν*, “seasonable grace, grace for help in a time of need.” This is an evidence of compassion, when, like the Samaritan, we afford seasonable help. To lament men’s troubles or miseries, without affording help, is to no purpose. Not so doth Christ, he gives seasonable help. Help being a thing that regards want, is always excellent, but its coming in season puts a crown upon it. A pardon to a malefactor when he is ready to be executed, is sweet and welcome. Such is the assistance given by Christ. All his saints may take this as a sure rule, both in their temptations and afflictions; when they can bear no longer, they shall be relieved, 1 Cor. x. 13. So it is said emphatically of him, Heb. ii. 18, “In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” It is true, there is something in all our temptations more than was in the temptation of Christ. There is something in ourselves to take part with every temptation; and there is enough in ourselves to tempt us, though nothing else should appear against us. With Christ it was not so; but this is so far from taking off his compassion towards us, that on all accounts whatever it doth increase it; for if he will give us succour because we are tempted, the sorer our temptations are, the more ready will he be to succour us. Take some instances of Christ’s giving this seasonable help; now this he doth several ways.

(1.) By keeping the believer in a strong habitual bent against that sin to the assaults of which he is obnoxious.

So it was in the case of Joseph: Christ knew that Joseph's great trial, and that wherein, if he had been conquered, he would have been undone, would lie upon his mistress tempting him to lewdness; whereupon he kept his heart in a steady frame against that sin, as his answer, without the least deliberation, argues, Gen. xxxix. 9. Herein is Christ exceedingly kind and tender in fortifying our hearts with abundance of grace as to that sin unto temptations whereunto we are most exposed; when, perhaps, in other things we are weak and often surprised.

(2.) Christ sometimes, by some strong impulse of actual grace recovers the soul from the very borders of sin. So it was in the case of David, 1 Sam. xxiv. 4—6. He was almost gone, as he speaks himself; his feet had *well nigh slipt*. The temptation was at the door of prevalency when a mighty impulse of grace recovered him. To shew his saints what they are, he sometimes suffers them to go to the very brow of the hill, and then causeth them to hear a word behind them, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," and that with power and efficacy, and so recovers them to himself.

(3.) By taking away the temptation itself, when it grows so violent that the poor soul knows not what to do. This is called "delivering the godly out of temptation," 2 Pet. ii. 9. As a man is plucked out of the snare, and the snare left behind to hold another. This have I known to be the case of many in sundry perplexing temptations. When they have been quite weary, have tried all means of help in vain, on a sudden the Lord rebuked satan, that they heard not one word more of him as to their temptation; Christ came in the storm, and said, "Peace, be still."

(4.) By giving fresh supplies of grace, according as temptations increase. So was it in the case of Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The temptation, whatever it was, grew high; Paul was earnest for its removal, and received only this answer concerning

the sufficiency of the grace of God for his support, notwithstanding all the increase of the temptation.

(5.) By giving them wisdom, to make a right, holy, and spiritual improvement of all temptations. St. James bids us count it "all joy when we fall into manifold temptations;" which could not be done were there not an holy and spiritual use to be made of them, which also himself manifests in the words following. There are manifold uses which experienced Christians, with assistance from Christ, may make of temptations. This is not the least, that by them we are brought to know ourselves. So Hezekiah was left to be tried, to "know what was in him." By temptation, some bosom, hidden corruption is often discovered that the soul knew not of before. As it was with Hazahel, in respect of enormous crimes, so in lesser things with the saints. They would never have believed there had been such corruptions in them as they have discovered upon their temptations. Yea, divers having been tempted to one sin, have discovered another that they thought not of. As some, being tempted to pride, or worldliness, or looseness of conversation, have been startled by it, and led to a discovery of a neglect of many duties, which before they thought not of. And this is from the tender care of Jesus Christ, giving them suitable help, without which no man can improve a temptation. And this is a suitable help indeed, whereby a temptation, which otherwise might be a deadly wound, proves the lancing of a festered sore, and the letting out of corruption, that might have endangered the life itself.

(6.) When the soul is at any time more or less overcome by temptations, Christ, in his tenderness, relieves it with mercy or pardon. By one more, or all of these ways, doth the Lord Jesus manifest his conjugal tenderness and compassion towards his saints under their temptations.

2. Christ is compassionate towards them in their afflictions; "In all their afflictions he is afflicted," Isai lxiii. 9. Yea, it seems that all our afflictions (at least those of one

sort, namely, persecutions,) are his in the first place, ours only by participation ; Col. i. 24, “ We fill up the measure of the afflictions of Christ.” Two things evidently manifest this compassionateness in Christ.

(1.) His interceding with his Father for their relief, Zech. i. 12. Christ intercedeth on our behalf, not only in respect of our sins, but also of our sufferings ; and when the work of our afflictions is accomplished, we shall have the relief he intercedes for. “ The Father always hears him ;” and we have not a deliverance from trouble, a recovering of health, ease of pain, freedom from any evil that ever laid hold on us, but it is given us on the intercession of Jesus Christ. The generation of the people of God are at this day alive, undevoured, merely on the account of the intercession of the Lord Jesus. His compassionateness hath been the fountain of their deliverances.

(2.) In that he doth and will, in the winding up of the matter, revenge the quarrel of their sufferings upon their enemies. This he accomplishes two ways. 1. Temporally, upon persons, kingdoms, nations, as he did upon the old Roman world, Rev. vi. 16 ; and this also he doth two ways. (1.) By calling out here and there an eminent opposer, and making him an example to all the world. So he dealt with Pharaoh, so he doth to this day. He lays his hand upon eminent adversaries ; fills one with fury, another with folly, blasts a third, and makes another wither, or destroys them utterly and terribly. (2.) In general, in the viols of his wrath, which he will in the latter days pour out upon the antichristian world. He will miserably destroy them, and make such work with them, that whosoever hears, both his ears shall tingle.

2. In eternal vengeance will he plead with the adversaries of his beloved.

In answer to this compassion of Christ, manifested as above, I place the saints’ chastity unto Christ in every state. So the apostle, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3, “ I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste

virgin to Christ ; and I fear lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtily, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Now there are three things wherein this chastity consists.

1. The not taking any thing into their affections for those purposes for which they have received Christ. Here the Galatians failed in their conjugal affection to Christ, they preserved not themselves chaste to him. They had received Christ for justification, and him only ; but after a while they took into the same place with him the righteousness of the law. How Paul deals with them hereupon is known. How pathetically doth he admonish them, how severely reprove them, how clearly convince them of their madness and folly ! This, then, is the first chaste affection believers bear in their hearts to Christ ; having received him for their righteousness and salvation before God, for the fountain, spring, and well-head of all their supplies, they will not now receive any other thing into his room and in his stead.

Herein then, of all things, do the saints endeavour to keep their affections chaste and loyal to Jesus Christ. He is made unto them of God righteousness, and they will own nothing else to that purpose ; yea, though he withdraws himself, they still continue solitary in a state of widowhood, refusing to be comforted, though many things offer themselves to that purpose, because he is not. This doth he who hath communion with Christ ; he watcheth diligently over his own heart, that nothing creep into its affections to give it any peace or establishment before God, but Christ only. Whenever that question is to be answered, " Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and appear before the high God ?" he doth not gather up, this or that I will do, or here and there I will watch and amend my ways ; but instantly he cries, In the Lord Jesus have I righteousness. All my desire is to be found in him, not having on my own righteousness.

2. In cherishing that Spirit, that holy Comforter which Christ sends to us, to abide with us in his room and

stead. He tells us that he sends him to that purpose, John xvi. 7. He gives him to us to abide with us for ever, for all those ends and purposes which he hath to fulfil towards us, and upon us. He gives him to dwell in us, to keep us and preserve us blameless for himself. His name is in him, and with him ; and it is upon his account that whatever is done to any of Christ's is done to Christ, because it is done to them in whom he is and dwells by his Spirit. Now, herein do the saints preserve their conjugal affections entire to Christ, that they labour by all means not to grieve his Holy Spirit, which he hath sent in his stead to abide with them. This the apostle puts them in mind of, Eph. iv. 30, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit."

There are two main ends for which Christ sends his Spirit to believers. First, for their sanctification. Secondly, for their consolation ; to which two all the particular acts of purging, teaching, anointing, and the rest that are ascribed to him, may be referred. And with respect to both these we may grieve him.

(1.) In respect of sanctification. He is the Spirit of holiness ; holy in himself, and the author of holiness in us ; he works it in us, Tit. iii. 5 ; and he persuades us to it by those motions of his which are not quenched. Now this, in the first place, grieves the Spirit, when he is carrying on in us a work so infinitely for our advantage, and without which we cannot see God, that we should run cross to him in the ways of unholiness, pollutions, and defilement. Indeed, what can grieve a loving and tender friend more than to oppose him and slight him, when he is most intent about our good, and that a good of the greatest consequence to us ? In this then believers make it their business to keep their hearts loyal, and their affections chaste to Jesus Christ. They labour instantly not to grieve the Holy Spirit by loose and foolish, by careless and negligent walking. Therefore shall no anger, wrath, malice, envy dwell in their hearts, because they are contrary to the holy, meek Spirit of Christ. They attend to

his motions, make use of his assistance, improve his gifts ; and nothing lies more upon their spirits than that they may walk worthy of the presence of this holy substitute of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2.) As to consolation ; this is the second great end for which Christ gives his Spirit to us, who from thence, by way of eminency, is called the Comforter ; to this end, he seals us, anoints us, establishes us, and gives us peace and joy. Now there be two ways whereby he may be grieved, as to this end of his mission, and our chastity to Jesus Christ thereby violated. First, by placing our comforts and joys in other things, and not being filled with joy in the Holy Ghost. When we make creatures, or any thing but what we receive by the Spirit of Christ, our joy and delight, we are false with Christ. So was it with Demas, who loved the present world. When the ways of the Spirit of God are grievous and burdensome to us, when we say, When will the sabbath be past, that we may exact all our labours ? When our delight and refreshment lies in earthly things, we are unsuitable to Christ. Wherefore believers are exceeding careful in this, not to place their joy and consolation in any thing but what is administered by the Spirit. Their daily work is, to get their hearts crucified to the world, and the things of it ; and the world to their hearts, that they may not have living affections to dying things. They look on the world as a crucified, dead thing, that hath neither form nor beauty ; and if at any times they have been entangled with inferior contentments, they cry out to Christ, O restore to us the joys of thy Spirit ! He is grieved, secondly, when, through unbelief, we will not, do not receive those consolations which he is abundantly willing that we should receive.

3. Christ marrying his church to himself, in his institutions, or matter and manner of his worship, his people still express the main of their chaste affections to him, to lie in keeping his institutions according to his appointment. He is a jealous God, and he gives himself that

title, in respect of his institutions. And the whole apostasy of the Christian church unto false worship is called fornication ; and the church that leads the others to false worship, the “mother of harlots.” On this account, those believers who really attend to communion with Jesus Christ, labour to keep their hearts chaste to him in his ordinances, institutions, and worship.

4. Christ manifests his love to his saints in a way of bounty, in that plentiful provision he makes for them. “ It hath pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell,” Col. i. 19 ; that “ of his fulness we might all receive, and grace for grace,” John i. 16. Whatever he gives us, his grace to assist us, his presence to comfort us, he doth it abundantly. You have the general assertion of it, Rom. v 20, “ Where sin abounded, grace did abound much more.” If grace abound much more in comparison of sin, it is abundant grace indeed, as will easily be granted by any that shall consider how sin hath abounded, and doth in every soul. Hence he is said to be able, and we are bid to expect that he should do for us, “ exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think,” Eph. iii. 20. Is it pardoning mercy we receive of him ? Why, he doth “ abundantly pardon,” Isai. lv. 7. He will multiply or add to pardon, he will add pardon to pardon, that grace and mercy shall abound above all our sins. Is it the Spirit he gives us ? “ He sheds him upon us richly or abundantly,” Tit. iii. 6, not only bidding us drink of the waters of life freely, but also bestowing him in such a plentiful measure, that “ rivers of water shall flow from them that receive him,” John vii. 38, 39, that they shall never thirst any more. Is it grace that we receive of him ? He gives that also in a way of bounty. We receive “ abundance of grace,” Rom. v. 17 : He “ abounds towards us in all wisdom and prudence,” Ephes. i. 8. If in any thing then we are straitened, it is in ourselves ; Christ deals bountifully with us. Indeed, the great sin of believers is, that they make not use of Christ’s bounty as they ought ; that we do not every day

take of him mercy in abundance. The oil never ceaseth till the vessels cease; supplies from Christ fail not but when our faith fails in receiving them.

Then, in answer to Christ's bounty, our return to him is in a way of duty; unto this two things are required. (1.) That we follow after and practise holiness in the power of it, as it is obedience unto Jesus Christ. All gospel-obedience is called, "whatsoever Christ commands us," Matt. xxviii. 20. And saith he, John xv. 14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do what I command you;" and it is required of us that we live to him who died for us, 2 Cor. v. 15; live to him in all holy obedience; live to him as our Lord and King. (2.) By labouring to abound in fruits of holiness; as he deals out unto us abundantly, so he requires that we abound in all grateful, obediential returns to him. The saints are not satisfied with that measure which at any time they have attained, but are still pressing that they may be more dutiful, more fruitful to Christ.

And this is a little glimpse of some of that communion which we enjoy with Christ. It is but a little from one who, of all the saints of God, hath the least experience of it, but who yet hath found that in it which is better than ten thousand worlds; who desires to spend the residue of the few and evil days of his pilgrimage in pursuit hereof, in the contemplation of the excellencies, desirableness, love and grace of our Lord Jesus, and in making returns of obedience according to his will, to whose soul, in the midst of the perplexities of this wretched world, and cursed rebellions of his own heart, this is the great relief, that "he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry."

CHAP. IV.

Of Communion with Christ in purchased grace.

We proceed to communion with Christ, in purchased grace. By purchased grace I understand all that righ-

teousness and grace which Christ hath procured, or doth by any means make us partakers of, by any thing that he hath done or suffered, or continueth to do as Mediator. What this purchased grace is, and how we hold communion with Christ therein, are the things that now come under consideration.

The first may be considered, 1. In respect of the rise.
2. Of its nature.

1. It hath a threefold rise in Christ. (1.) His life. (2.) His death. (3.) His continued intercession. All the actions of Christ as Mediator, leading to the communication of grace unto us, may be referred to these heads.

This grace wherein we have communion with Christ flowing from these fountains, may be referred to these three: The grace of justification: the grace of sanctification: and the grace of privilege.

Now that we have communion with Christ in this purchased grace, is evident on this single consideration; that there is almost nothing that Christ hath done, which is a spring of that grace whereof we speak, but we are said to do it with him. We are crucified with him, Gal. ii. 20; we are dead with him, 2 Tim. ii. 11, Col. iii. 3; and buried with him, Rom. vi. 4, Col. ii. 12; we are quickened together with him, Col. ii. 13; risen with him, Col. iii. 1. "He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places," Ephes. ii. 5, 6.

The first spring of this grace, wherein we have communion with Christ, is first to be considered, and that is the obedience of his life, concerning which it must be declared, (1.) What it is. (2.) What influence it hath into the grace, whereof we speak.

(1.) By the obedience of the life of Christ, I intend the universal conformity of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator to the whole will of God; and his complete actual fulfilling of the whole of every law of God, or doing of all that God in them required. He might have been perfectly holy by obedience to the law of creation,

the moral law, as the angels were, neither could any more as a man walking with God be required of him. But he submitted himself also to every law or ordinance that was introduced upon the occasion of sin, which on his own account he could not be subject to; it becoming him to fulfil all righteousness, Matt. iii. 15, as he speaks in reference to a newly-instituted ceremony.

That obedience is properly ascribed unto Jesus Christ, as Mediator, the Scripture is witness, Heb. v. 8, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience," &c. yea, he was obedient to death; for therein he did "make his soul an offering for sin," Isa. liii. 10. And he not only "sanctified himself," John xvii. 19; but he also "offered up himself," Heb. ix. 14, "an offering of a sweet savour to God," Ephes. v. 2. Hence as to the whole of his work, he is called the "Father's servant," Isa. xlii. 1, ver. 19. And he professes of himself that he came into the world to do the will of God, the will of him that sent him; for which he manifests his great readiness, Heb. x. 7; all which evince his obedience.

Now this obedience of Christ may be considered, as to the habitual root; and as to the actual parts, or duties of it.

(1.) The habitual righteousness of Christ as Mediator in his human nature, was the absolute, complete, exact conformity of the soul of Christ to the will, mind, or law of God; or his perfect, habitual, inherent righteousness. This habitual grace of Christ, though not absolutely infinite, yet in respect of any other creature, it is as the water of the sea to the water of a pond or pool. All other creatures are depressed from perfection by this, that they subsist in a created, dependant being, and so have the fountain of what is communicated to them without them. But the human nature of Christ subsists in the person of the Son of God, and so hath the bottom and fountain of its holiness in the strictest unity with itself. (2.) The actual obedience of Christ was his willing, cheerful performance of every thing that God, by virtue of any law did require; and moreover his observance of the peculiar

law of the Mediator. Hereof then are two parts, First, That whatever was required of us by virtue of any law, that he did and fulfilled.* Whatever was required of us, by the law of nature in our state of innocence, whatever kind of duty was added by positive or ceremonial institutions, whatever is required of us in the way of obedience to righteous judicial laws, he did it all. Hence he is said to be made under the law, Gal. iv. 4, subject or obnoxious to it, to all the precepts or commands of it. Secondly, There was a peculiar law of the Mediator, which respected himself merely, and contained all those acts and duties of his, which are not for our imitation. So that obedience which he shewed in dying, was peculiarly to this law, John x. 18. "I have power to lay down my life. This commandment have I received of my Father." As Mediator, he received this peculiar command of his Father, that he should lay down his life, and take it again, and he was obedient thereunto. This then is the obedience of Christ, which was the first thing to be considered.

The next is, that it hath an influence into the grace of which we speak, wherein we hold communion with him.

1. For his habitual righteousness, I shall only propose it under these two considerations, 1. Upon this supposition, that it was needful we should have a Mediator who was God and man in one person, as it could not otherwise be, it must needs be that he must be so holy. 2. That the relation which this righteousness of Christ hath to the grace we receive from him, is only this, that thereby, he was fit to do all that he had to do for us. Such an one became us, it was needful he should be such an one, that he might do what he had to do. And the reasons hereof are two. First, Had he not been completely furnished with habitual grace, he could never have actually fulfilled the righteousness which was required at his hands. Secondly, He could not have been a perfect sacrifice, nor

* "No :" (Mr. Wesley remarks here) "he requires us to repent and believe."

have answered all the types and figures of him, that were complete and without blemish ; but now Christ having this habitual righteousness, if he had never yielded any continued obedience to the law, but had suffered as soon after his incarnation as Adam sinned after his creation, he had been a fit sacrifice and offering, and therefore doubtless his following obedience hath another use, besides to fit him for an oblation, for which he was most fit without it.

2. Christ's obedience to the law of mediation was that which was requisite for the discharging of his office, and is not imputed unto us, as though we had done it, though the fruits of it are ; but is of the nature of his intercession ; whereby he provides the good things we stand in need of, at least subserviently to his oblation and intercession.

3. As to his actual fulfilling of the law, I observe, (1.) That whatever Christ did as a man subject to any law, he did it as Mediator, because he did it as a part of the duty incumbent on him, who undertook so to be. (2.) That whatever Christ did as Mediator, he did it for them whose Mediator he was. (3.) That the end of this active obedience of Christ cannot be assigned to be that he might be fitted for his death and oblation. For he answered all types, and was every way fit to be made an offering for sin by his union and habitual grace ; so that if the obedience Christ performed be not done upon our account, there is no just cause to be assigned why he should live in the world so long as he did in perfect obedience to all the laws of God. Had he died before, there had been perfect innocence and perfect holiness by his habitual grace and infinite virtue, from the dignity of his person, and surely he yielded not that long course of all manner of obedience, but for some special purpose, in reference to our salvation.* (4.) That Jesus Christ

* "Yes," observes Mr. Wesley, "for our example."

yielded perfect obedience to all those laws, which came upon us by the occasion of sin ; as the ceremonial law ; yea those very institutions that signified the washing away of sin, and repentance from sin, as the baptism of John, which he had no need of himself. This therefore must needs be for us. (5.) That the obedience of Christ cannot be reckoned amongst his sufferings,* but is clearly distinct from it ; doing is one thing, suffering is another. See then briefly what we have obtained by those considerations.

1. By the obedience of the life of Christ, you see what is intended, his willing submission unto, and perfect complete fulfilling of every law of God, that any of the saints of God were obliged unto. 2. This obedience was performed by Christ, not for himself, but for us and in our stead. 3. This perfect complete obedience of Christ to the law is reckoned unto us. Are we then freed from this obedience ? We are not free from obedience, as a way of walking with God, but we are, as a way of working, to come to him.† This is fully expressed in that typical representation of our justification before the Lord, Zech. iii, 3, 4, 5 ; two things are there expressed, to belong to our free acceptance before God. First, The taking away of the guilt of our sin, our filthy robes ; this is done by the death of Christ. Remission of sin is the proper fruit thereof ; but there is more required, even a collation of right to life eternal ; this is here called fine change of raiment : now this is only made ours by the obedience of Christ, as the other by his death.‡

* Christ's obedience was "obedience unto death," Phil. ii. 8, and therefore was a part of his sufferings.

† "No :" says Mr. Wesley, in no wise :" referring to John vi. 27, *Labour, εργαζεσθε, work for the meat which endureth to everlasting life;* and to Phil. ii. 12, *work out your own salvation, &c.*

‡ They are both obtained for us by his *obedience unto death*, through the merit of which, being justified by grace, we are made heirs of

The second spring of our communion with Christ in purchased grace, is his death and oblation. He lived for us ; he died for us. He was ours in all he did, in all he suffered. Now the death of Christ, as it is a spring of that purchased grace wherein we have communion with him, is in the Scripture proposed under a threefold consideration : of a price ; of a sacrifice ; of a penalty. In the first regard, its proper effect is redemption ; in the second, reconciliation ; in the third, satisfaction ; which are the great ingredients of that purchased grace whereby we have communion with Christ.

1. It is a price, " We are bought with a price," 1 Cor. vi. 20. " A price of redemption," 1 Tim. ii. 6. The proper effect of the death of Christ as a price or ransom, is redemption. Now redemption is the deliverance of any one from bondage, or captivity, and the miseries attending it, by the interposition of a price or ransom paid by the Redeemer, to him by whose authority the captive was detained.

(1.) In general, it is a deliverance : hence Christ is called the Deliverer, Rom. xi. 26, giving himself to deliver us, Gal. i. 4. He is Jesus, who " delivers us from the wrath to come," 1 Thess. i. 10.

(2.) It is the delivery of one from bondage or captivity. We are without him all prisoners and captives, " bound in prison," Isa. lix. 1. " Sitting in darkness, in the prison-house," Isa. xlvi. 7, chap. xlii. 9. " Prisoners in the pit wherein there is no water," Zech. ix. 11. " The captives of the mighty and the prey of the terrible," Isa. xlii. 25.

(3.) The person committing thus to prison, is God himself. To him we owe our debts, Matt. vi. 12. " Against him are our offences," Psal. li. 4. He is the Judge and Law-giver, Jam. iv. 12 ; to sin is to rebel against him.



eternal life, Tit. iii. 7. But the *change of raiment* spoken of by the prophet, undoubtedly means that renewal of our souls after the Divine image, or that holiness of heart and life, which is our meetness for heaven. See Col. i. 12, Heb. xii. 14.

He shuts up men under disobedience, Rom. xi. 32. And he shall cast both body and soul of the impenitent into hell-fire, Matt. x. 28.

(4.) The miseries that attend this condition are innumerable. Bondage to satan and sin, comprises the sum of them, from all which we are delivered by the death of Christ as a ransom. "God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood," Col. i. 13, 14. And he "redeems us from all iniquity," Tit. ii. 14; from our "vain conversation," 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; even from the guilt and power of our sin, purchasing us "to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14.

(5.) And all this is by the payment of the price into the hand of God, by whose supreme authority we were detained captives under the sentence of the law. The debt is due to the great Householder, Matt. xviii. 23, 24. And the penalty is his curse, and wrath from which by it we are delivered, Rev. i. 5. And this is the first consideration of the death of Christ, as it hath an influence into the procurement of that grace whercin we hold communion with him.

2. It was a sacrifice also. He had a body prepared him, Heb. x. 5, wherein he was to accomplish what by the typical oblations of the law was prefigured. And that body he offered, Heb. x. 10, that is, his whole human nature, for "his soul was made an offering for sin." He gave himself a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour. Now the end of sacrifices, such as his was, was atonement and reconciliation. This is every where ascribed to them. And this is the tendency of the death of Christ, as a sacrifice, atonement, and reconciliation with God. Sin had broken friendship between God and us, Isa. lxiii. 10; whence his wrath was on us, John iii. 36; and we are by nature obnoxious to it, Eph. ii. 3. This is taken away by the death of Christ, as it was a sacrifice, Dan. ix. 24. "When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," Rom. v. 10. And

thereby do we receive the atonement, ver. 11. And this is the second consideration of the death of Christ.

3. It was also a punishment. A punishment in our stead. "He was wounded for our sins, and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was on him," Isa. liii. 5. God made all our iniquities (that is, all the punishment of them) to meet upon him, ver. 6. "He bare the sins of many," ver. 12. "His own self bare our sins in his body on the tree," 1 Pet. ii. 24, 25. Now bearing of punishment tends directly to the giving satisfaction to him who was offended. Justice can desire no more than a proportional punishment due to the offence. And this, on his own voluntary taking of our persons, undertaking to be our Mediator, was inflicted on our Lord Jesus. His substituting himself in our room, being allowed of by the righteous Judge, satisfaction to him doth thence properly ensue.

And this is the threefold consideration of the death of Christ, as it is a principal spring of that grace, wherein we have communion with him. This then is the second rise of purchased grace, which we are to eye, if we hold communion with Christ in it, his death and blood-shedding, under this threefold notion, of a price, an offering, and punishment. But this is not all; the Lord Christ goes farther yet, he does not leave us so, but follows on the work to the utmost. He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. He rose again to carry on the complete work of purchased grace; that is, by his intercession; which is the third rise of it. In respect of this he is said to be "able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him, seeing he liveth ever to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 27.

Now the intercession of Christ, in respect of its influence into purchased grace, is considered two ways. First, As a carrying on of his oblation, for the obtaining and conferring on us all the fruits and effects thereof. This is called his "appearing in the presence of God for us," Heb. ix. 24. That is, as the high-priest having

offered the great offering for expiation of sin, carried it the blood thereof into the most holy place, where was the representation of the presence of God, so to perfect the atonement he had made for himself and the people so the Lord Christ having offered himself as a sweet smelling sacrifice to God, being sprinkled with his own blood, appears in the presence of God, as it were to remind him of the engagement made to him, or the redemption of sinners by his blood; and this appearance of his hath an influence into purchased grace, inasmuch as thereby he puts in his claim for it in our behalf. Secondly, He procureth the Holy Spirit for us, effectuall to bestow all this purchased grace upon us. The fountain of purchased grace being discovered, next the nature of this grace may be considered. As was said, it may be referred unto three heads: 1. Grace of acceptance with God. 2. Grace of sanctification from God. 3. Grace of privileges with, and before God.

1. Of acceptance with God. Out of Christ we are in a state of alienation from God, accepted neither in our persons, nor our services. The first issue of purchased grace is to restore us to a state of acceptance; and this is done two ways. (1.) By a removal of that for which we are refused, the cause of the enmity. (2.) By a bestowing of that for which we are accepted.*

This is the first part of purchased grace, wherein the saints have communion with Jesus Christ. In remission of sin, and imputation of righteousness doth it consist,†

* That is, says Mr. Wesley, (to shew the inaccuracy of this manner of speaking, then in use) "by removing crookedness and bestowing straightness!" Certainly the things which our author represents as *two*, are but *one*: procured for us by Christ's obedience unto death, through the merits of which we are *justified from all things*, which includes both pardon and acceptance.

† In Rom. iv. 1—8, the apostle represents *justification*, the *imputation of righteousness*, the *non-imputation of sin*, and the *pardon of sin*, as being different expressions signifying one and the same thing.

from the death of Christ, as a price, sacrifice, and punishment ; from the life of Christ spent in obedience to the law doth it arise. The great product it is of the Father's righteousness, wisdom, love, and grace ; of the love and condescension of the Son, the great discovery of the Holy Ghost, in the revelation of the mystery of the gospel.

2. The second is the grace of sanctification. He doth not only purchase love for his saints, but also makes them lovely. He came not by blood only, but by water and blood. He doth not only justify his saints from the guilt of sin, but also sanctify and wash them from the filth of sin ; the first is from his life and death as a sacrifice of propitiation, this from his death as a purchase, and his life as an example. So the apostle, Heb. ix. 14, as also, Eph. v. 26, 27.

Two things are eminent in this issue of purchased grace. 1. The removal of defilement. 2. The bestowing of actual grace. For the first, it is also threefold. (1.) The habitual cleansing of our nature. We are naturally unclean, defiled ; habitually so. For " who can bring a clean thing from that which is unclean ? " Job xiv. 4. " That which is born of the flesh is flesh," John iii. 6. It is in the pollution of our blood that we are born, Ezek. xvi. wholly defiled and polluted. The grace of sanctification purchased by the blood of Christ removes this defilement of our nature, 1 Cor. vi. 11, " Such were some of you ; but ye are washed, ye are sanctified." So also, Tit. iii. 3—5, " He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." (2.) Taking away our actual transgressions. A spot, a stain, filth attends every sin. Now, " the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." (3.) In our best duties we have defilement, Isa. lxiv. 6. Self, unbelief, form, drop themselves into all that we do. We may be ashamed of our choicest performances ; but the Lord Christ, first as our High-Priest, bears the iniquity, the guilt, and pro-

vocation which in severe justice doth attend them, Exod. xxviii. 37, 38, and not only so, but he washes away all their filth and defilements. He is as a refiner's fire, to purge both the sons of Levi and their offerings, adding moreover sweet incense to them that they may be accepted. Whatever is of the Spirit, of himself, of grace, that remains ; whatever is of self, flesh, unbelief, that is hay and stubble, that he consumes, wastes, takes away. And this cleansing of our natures, persons, and duties, hath its whole foundation in the death of Christ. Hence our washing and purifying, our cleansing and purging, is ascribed to his blood and the sprinkling thereof. Meritoriously this work is done by the shedding of the blood of Christ ; efficiently by its sprinkling. The sprinkling of the blood of Christ proceedeth from the communication of the Holy Ghost ; which he promiseth to us, as purchased by him for us. He is the pure water, where-with we are sprinkled from all our sins. That spirit of judgment and burning that takes away the filth and blood of the daughters of Sion. And this is the first thing in the grace of sanctification.

2. By bestowing actual grace. The blood of Christ in this purchased grace doth not only take away defilement, but also gives purity. (1.) It gives the Spirit of holiness to dwell in us ; " He is made unto us sanctification," 1 Cor. i. 30, by procuring for us the spirit of sanctification ; our renewing is of the Holy Ghost, who is shed on us through Christ alone, Titus iii. 6. This the apostle mainly insists on, Rom. viii. to wit, that the principal gift of sanctification that we receive from Christ, is the indwelling of the Spirit, and our following the guidance thereof. (2.) He gives us habitual grace, a principle of grace opposed to the principle of lust that is in us by nature. This is the grace that dwells in us ; makes its abode with us, which according to the distinct faculties of our souls, wherein it is, or the distinct objects about which it is exercised, receiveth various appellations, being

Indeed all but one new principle of life. In the understanding it is light, in the will obedience, in the affections love, in all faith. So also it is differenced in respect of its operation, when it carries out the soul to rest on Christ, it is faith ; when to delight in him it is love ; but still one and the same habit of grace. (3.) Actual influence for the performance of every spiritual duty. After the saints have both the former, yet Christ tells them, that without him they can do nothing, John xv. 5. They are still in dependance upon him for new influences of grace ; they cannot live and spend upon the old stock ; for every new act they must have new grace ; he must work in us to "will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. ii. 13. And in these three consists that purchased grace in the point of sanctification, wherein we have communion with Christ.

3. This purchased grace consists in privileges to stand before God ; and these are of two sorts, primary and consequential ; primary in adoption ; the Spirit of adoption : consequential are all the favours of the gospel.

These are the things wherein we have communion with Christ as to purchased grace in this life. Drive them up to perfection, and you have that which we call everlasting glory ; perfect acceptance, perfect holiness, perfect adoption, or the inheritance of sons.

I proceed now to the manner how we hold communion with Christ in these things ; as, 1. How we hold communion with him in the obedience of his life and merit of his death, as to acceptance with God the Father. 2. How we hold communion with Christ in his blood, as to the spirit of sanctification, the habits and acts of grace. 3. How we hold communion with him as to the privileges we enjoy.

CHAP. V.

How the Saints hold Communion with Christ, as to their Acceptance with God.

Communion with Christ in purchased grace, as to acceptance with God, from the obedience of his life, and efficacy of his death, is the first thing we inquire into. The discovery of what on our part is required thereto, is that which herein I intend.

1. On the part of Christ there are two things, (1.) That what he did, he did not for himself, but for us. (2.) What he suffered, he suffered not for himself, but for us. That is, his intention was that all he did and suffered should be for us, as to our acceptance with God; that he still continueth making use of what he so did and suffered for that end, and that only. Now this is most evident.

(1.) What he did, he did for us, and not for himself. "He was made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," Gal. iv. 4, 5. He was made under the law, that is, in that condition that he was obnoxious to the will and commands of it, and why was this? To what end? For himself? No, but to redeem us was the aim of all that he did, of all his obedience, and of what he did. This very intention in what he did, he acquaints us with, John xvii. 19, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified through the truth;" I sanctify myself, dedicate and set myself apart to all that work I have to do. (2.) In what he suffered; this is more clear, Dan. ix. 26, "Messias shall be cut off, and not for himself;" and the apostle lays down this as a main difference between him and the high-priests of the Jews, that when they made their solemn offerings, they offered first for themselves, and then for the people, but Jesus Christ offereth only for others. He had no sin, and could make no sacrifice for his own sin, but only for that of others.

To complete this communion on the part of Christ, it

is required, 1. That there be added to what he hath done, the gospel tenders of that complete justification and acceptance with God, which ariseth from his perfect obedience and sufferings. Now they are two-fold. (1.) Declaratory, in the promises of the gospel. John vii. 37, Matt. xi. 28, "He that believeth shall be saved," "Come to me and you shall have life." (2.) In this tender of acceptance with God, on the account of what he hath done and suffered, a law is established, that whosoever receives it shall be so accepted.

2. He sends them his Holy Spirit to quicken them, John vi. 63, to cause them "that are dead to hear his voice," John v. and to work in them whatever is required of them, to make them partakers of his righteousness, and accepted with God. Thus doth Christ deal with his; he lives and dies with an intention to work out a complete righteousness for them; their enjoying of it to a perfect acceptance before God, is all that in the one and the other he aimed at. Then he tenders it to them, declares the usefulness and preciousness of it, stirring them up to a desire of it; and lastly, bestows it upon them, that they should by it, for it, with it, be perfectly accepted with his Father.

That which remains for me to do, is, to shew how believers hold distinct communion with Christ, in this grace of acceptance, and how thereby they keep alive a sense of it, the comfort and life of it being to be renewed every day. Without this, life is an hell; no peace, no joy, can we be made partakers of, but what hath its rise from hence. But you may say, what need then of our own obedience? I answer, First, Our universal obedience and good works are indispensably necessary from the sovereign appointment and will of God. In general, "This is the will of God, even our sanctification," I Thess. iv. 3. This is that which God wills, which he requires of us, that we be holy, that we be obedient, that we do his will as the angels do in heaven. The equity and advantage of this ground of our obedience might at

large be insisted on. And were there no more, this might suffice. If it be the will of God, it is our duty. (1.) The Father hath ordained or appointed it, it is the will of the Father, Eph. ii. 10; the Father is spoken of personally; Christ being mentioned as Mediator. (2.) The Son hath ordained and appointed it as Mediator, John xv. 16, "I have ordained you that you should bring forth fruit" of obedience. And, (3.) The Holy Ghost appoints and ordains believers to works of obedience and holiness, and to work holiness in others; so in particular, Acts xiii. 2, he appoints and designs men to the great work of obedience in preaching the gospel; and in sinning, men sin against him.

Secondly, Our holiness, our obedience, is one eminent end of the peculiar dispensation of Father, Son, and Spirit in the business of exalting the glory of God in our salvation; of the love of the Father; the purchasing love of the Son, and the operative love of the Spirit. (1.) It is a peculiar end of the love of the Father, Eph. i. 4, "He hath chosen us, that we should be holy and unblamable." His aim and design in choosing of us was, that we should be holy and "unblamable before him in love." (2.) It is so also of the exceeding love of the Son, whereof the testimonies are innumerable. I shall give but one or two; Tit. ii. 14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This was his aim, his design, in giving himself for us, as Eph. v. 26, 27, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (3.) It is the very work of the love of the Holy Ghost; his whole work upon us, in us, for us, consists in preparing us for obedience, enabling us to it, and bringing forth the fruits of it in us.

And thus have we a two-fold ground of the necessity of

our obedience and personal holiness, God hath appointed it, he requires it. And it is an eminent immediate end of the distinct dispensation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the work of our salvation. If God's sovereignty over us is to be owned ; if his love towards us be to be regarded ; if the whole work of the ever-blessed Trinity, for us, and in us, be of any moment, our obedience is necessary.

Further, It is necessary in respect of the end thereof, and that whether we consider God, ourselves, or the world.

1. The end of our obedience in respect of God is his glory. Particularly, (1.) It is the glory of the Father, Matt. v. 16, " Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." By our walking in the light of faith, doth glory arise to the Father. The fruits of his love, of his kindness, are seen upon us ; and God is glorified in our behalf. And, (2.) The Son is glorified thereby. It is the will of God, that as all men honour the Father, " so should they honour the Son," John v. 23. And how is this done? By believing in him, John xiv. 1, obeying of him. Hence, John xvii. 10, he says, " he is glorified in believers," and prays for an increase of grace and union for them, that he might be yet more glorified, and all might know that as Mediator he was sent of God. (3.) The Spirit is glorified also by it, he is grieved by our disobedience, Eph. iv. 30 ; and therefore his glory is in our bringing forth fruit. He dwells in us as in his temple, which is not to be defiled ; holiness becometh his habitation for ever.

2. The end in respect of ourselves immediately is threefold. Honour. Peace. Usefulness. (1.) Honour; it is by holiness that we are made like unto God, and his image is renewed again in us. This was our honour at our creation ; this exalted us above all our fellow-creatures here below ; we were made in the image of God. This we lost by sin, and became " like the beasts that perish." To this honour of conformity to God, of bearing his

image, are we exalted again by holiness alone. "Be ye holy," says God, "because I am holy," 1 Pet. i. 16. And "be ye perfect," that is, in doing good, "as your heavenly Father is perfect," Matt. v. 48, in a likeness and conformity to him; and herein is the image of God renewed, Eph. iv. 23, 24. (2.) Peace; by it we have communion with God, wherein peace alone is to be enjoyed. "The wicked are like a troubled sea, that cannot rest," and "there is no peace to them, saith my God," Isaiah lvii. 21. There is no peace, rest, or quietness, in a distance, separation, or alienation from God. He is the rest of our souls, in the light of his countenance is life and peace. Now if we walk in the light as he is light, we have fellowship one with another, 1 John i. 7, "And verily our fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son Jesus Christ," ver. 3; he that walks in the light of new obedience, he hath communion with God, and in his presence is fulness of joy for ever, without it there is nothing but darkness, wandering, and confusion. (3.) Usefulness; a man without holiness is good for nothing, "Ephraim," says the prophet, "is an empty vine, that brings forth fruit to itself." Notwithstanding the seeming usefulness of men, who serve the providence of God in their generations, I could easily manifest that the world and the church might want them, and that indeed in themselves they are good for nothing; only the holy man is a common benefit.

3. The end of it in respect of others in the world is manifold. (1.) It serves to the conviction and stopping the mouths of some of the enemies of God. First, here, 1 Pet. iii. 16, "Keeping a good conscience, that wherein they speak against you as evil doers, they may be ashamed, beholding your good conversation in Christ. (2.) The conversion of others, 1 Pet. ii. 12, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that, wherein they speak against you as evil doers, beholding your good works, they may glorify God in the day of visitation." Even revilers, persecutors, evil-speakers, have been over-

come by the constant holy walking of professors, and when their day of visitation hath come, have glorified God on that account. (3.) The benefit of all; partly in keeping off judgments from the residue of men, as ten good men would have preserved Sodom; partly by their real communication of good to them, with whom they have to do in their generation. Holiness makes a man a good man, useful to all, and others eat of the fruits of the Spirit that he brings forth continually.

4. It is necessary in respect of the state and condition of justified persons; and that whether you consider their state of acceptance, or of sanctification. (1.) They are accepted and received into friendship with an holy God; "A God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;" who hates every unclean thing. And is it not necessary that they should be holy, who are admitted into his presence, walk in his sight, yea, lie in his bosom? Should they not, with all diligence, "cleanse themselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord." (2.) In respect of sanctification; we have in us a new nature, this new nature is fed, cherished, nourished, kept alive by the fruits of holiness.

5. It is necessary in respect of the proper place of holiness in the new covenant, and that is two-fold. (1.) Of the means unto the end; God hath appointed, that holiness shall be the means, the way, to that eternal life, which as in itself it is his gift, by Jesus Christ; so with regard to his constitution of our obedience, as the means of attaining it, is a reward, and God in bestowing of it a rewarder. Though it be not the cause of our justification, yet it is the way appointed of God for us to walk in for obtaining of salvation; and therefore he that hath hope of eternal life purifies himself as he is pure; and none shall ever come to that end, who walketh not in that way, "for without holiness it is impossible to see God." (2.) It is a sign and evidence of grace, that is of acceptance with God, and the whole expression of our thankfulness. He that upon these accounts doth not think

universal holiness and obedience to be of indispensable necessity, unless also it be exalted into the room of the obedience and righteousness of Christ, let him be filthy still.

It remains that I now shew what is required on our part: this consists in the ensuing particulars.

1. The saints cordially approve of this righteousness, as that alone which is absolutely complete, and able to make them acceptable before God. And this supposeth three things. (1.) Their clear and full conviction of the necessity of a righteousness wherewith to appear before God* (2.) They weigh their own righteousness in the balance, and find it wanting. And this two ways: First, in general, and upon the whole, at their first setting themselves before God. When men are convinced of the necessity of a righteousness, they catch at every thing that presents itself to them for relief. As men ready to sink in deep waters, catch at that which is next to save them from drowning. So did the Jews, Rom. ix. 31, 32, they caught hold of the law, and it would not relieve them, and they perished with it. Here many perish, and never get one step nearer God all their days. This the saints renounce. They have no confidence in the flesh, they know that all they can do will not avail them. This they bear in their minds daily, that upon the account of what they have done, can do, ever shall do, they cannot be accepted with God, or justified thereby. Secondly, in particular; they daily weigh all their particular actions in the balance, and find them wanting, as to any such completeness, as upon their own account to be accepted with God. These thoughts accompany them in their duties, in their best and most choice performances. Lord, what am I in my best estate? How little suitableness

* Next to justification and peace with God, the saints want holiness of heart and life, or entire sanctification of body, soul, and spirit, to qualify them to appear before God, and to dwell with him.

unto thy holiness is in my best duties? O spare me! in reference to the best thing that ever I did in my life. He who has communion with Christ, when he is highest in the duties of sanctification, is clearest in the apprehension of his own unprofitableness, and rejects every thought that might arise in his heart, of setting his peace in them or upon them. He says to his soul, Do these things seem something to thee? Alas! thou hast to do with an infinitely holy God, who looks through and through all that vanity, which thou art but little acquainted with; and should he deal with thee according to thy best works, thou must perish.

(3.) They approve of, value, and rejoice in this righteousness for their acceptation, which the Lord Jesus hath wrought out for them; this being discovered to them, they approve of it with all their hearts, and rest in it. Isaiah xlv. 24, "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength," This is their language, when once the righteousness of God in Christ is made known to them: here is righteousness indeed; here have I rest for my soul.

And this is the first way whereby the saints hold daily communion with the Lord Jesus, in this purchased grace of acceptation with God. They consider, approve of, and rejoice in the way, means, and thing itself.

2. They make an actual commutation with the Lord Jesus, as to their sins and his righteousness; of this there are also sundry parts. (1.) They continually keep alive upon their hearts a sense of the guilt and evil of sin, even then when they are under a comfortable persuasion of their personal acceptance with God. A sense of pardon takes away the horror and fear, but not a due sense of the guilt of sin. It is the daily exercise of the saints of God, to consider the great provocation that is in sin, their sins; the sin of their nature and lives; to render themselves vile in their own thoughts on that account, to compare it with the terror of the Lord, and to judge themselves continually. This they do in general,

“ My sin is ever before me,” says David ; they set sin before them, not to terrify and affright their souls with it, but that a due sense of the evil of it may be kept alive upon their hearts. (2.) They gather up in their thoughts the sins for which they have not made a particular reckoning with God in Christ, or if they have begun so to do, yet they have not made clear work of it, not come to a clear and comfortable issue. There is nothing more dreadful, than for a man to be able to digest his convictions, to have sin look him in the face, and speak perhaps some words of terror to him, and to be able by any charms of diversions or delays to put it off, without coming to a full trial in reference thereto. This the saints do ; they gather up their sins, lay them in the balance of the law ; see and consider their weight and desert. And then,—

3. They make this commutation I speak of with Jesus Christ, that is, (1.) They seriously consider, and by faith conquer all objections to the contrary, that Jesus Christ hath undergone the punishment that was due to those sins that lay now under his eye and consideration, Isaiah liii. 6, 2 Cor. v. 21. He hath as certainly answered the justice of God for them, as the sinner could do should he at that instant be cast into hell. (2.) They hearken to the voice of Christ, calling them to him with their burden: “ Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden,” come with your burdens, come, poor soul, with thy guilt of sin ! What to do ? Why, this is mine, saith Christ ; I come to take thy sins, and bear them away ; they are my lot. Give me thy burden, give me all thy sins ; thou knowest not what to do with them, I know how to dispose of them well ; so that God shall be glorified, and thy soul delivered. Hereupon, (3.) They lay down their sins at the cross of Christ, upon his shoulders ; this is faith’s great and bold venture upon the grace, faithfulness, and truth of God. To stand by the cross and say, Ah ! “ He is bruised for my sins, and wounded for my transgressions, and the chastisement of my peace is upon

him," he is thus made sin for me. Here I give up my sins to him that is able to bear them. He requires it of my hands, that I should be content he should undertake for them, and heartily I consent. This is every day's work. I know not how any peace can be maintained without it. If it be the work of souls to receive Christ, as made sin for us, we must receive him as one that takes our sins upon him. Not as though he died any more, but as the faith of the saints of old made that present before their eyes, which was not yet come to pass, Heb. xi. 1; so faith now makes that present which was accomplished and past many generations ago. This it is to know Christ crucified. (4.) Having thus by faith given up their sins to Christ, and seen God laying them all on him, they draw nigh, and take from him that righteousness which he hath wrought out for them; so fulfilling that of the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 21, "He was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." They consider him tendering himself and his righteousness, to be their righteousness before God; they take it, accept it, and complete this blessed exchange of faith. Anger, curse, wrath, death, sin as to its guilt, he took it all away; with him we leave whatever of this nature belongs to us, and from him we receive love, life, righteousness, and peace.

There is not any thing that Jesus Christ is more delighted with, than that his saints should always hold communion with him, as to this giving and receiving. For, (1.) This exceedingly honours him, and gives him the glory that is his due; many indeed cry, Lord, Lord, and make mention of him, but honour him not at all. How so? They take his work out of his hands, and ascribe it unto other things; their repentance, their duties, shall bear their iniquities. They do not say so, but they do so. The commutation they make, if they make any, is with themselves. All their bartering about sin is in and with their own souls. The work that Christ came to do in the world, was to bear our iniquities, and lay

down his life a ransom for our sins. The cup he had to drink of was filled with our sins, as to the punishment due to them. What greater dishonour then can be done to the Lord Jesus, than to ascribe this work to any thing else, to think to get rid of our sins any other way ? Hercin then, I say, is Christ honoured indeed, when we go to him with our sins, by faith, and say unto him, Lord, this is thy work, this is that for which thou camest into the world, this is that thou hast undertaken to do ; thou callest for my burden, which is too heavy for me to bear ; take it, blessed Redeemer ; thou tenderest thy righteousness, that is my portion. Then is Christ honoured, then is the glory of mediation ascribed to him, when we walk with him in this communion. (2.) This exceedingly endears the souls of the saints to him, and constrains them to put a due value upon him, his love, his righteousness, and grace. Who would not love him ? I have been with the Lord Jesus, may the poor soul say, I have left my sins, my burden with him, and he hath given me his righteousness, wherewith I am going with boldness to God. I was dead, and am alive, for he died for me ; I was cursed, and am blessed, for he was made a curse for me ; I was troubled, but have peace, for the chastisement of my peace was upon him ; I knew not what to do, nor whither to cause my sorrow to go ; by him have I received joy unspeakable and glorious, if I do not love him, delight in him, obey him, live to him, die for him, I am worse than the devils in hell. Now the great aim of Christ in the world is to have an high esteem in the hearts of his people, to have there, as he hath in himself, the pre-eminence in all things ; not to be justled up and down among other things ; but to be all, and in all. And thus the saints of God esteem him, upon the engaging themselves to this communion with him.

Yea, but you will say, if this be so, what need we to repent, or amend our ways, it is but going to Christ by faith, making this exchange with him, and so we may sin

that grace may abound ? I judge no man's person, but this I must needs say, that I do not understand how a man that makes this objection in cold blood, not under a temptation or accidental darkness, can have any acquaintance with Jesus Christ. However, this I am certain of, that this communion in itself produces quite other effects. For repentance ; it is, I suppose, a gospel-repentance that is intended. For a legal repentance, full of dread, amazement, terror, I confess this communion takes it away, casts it out, with its bondage and fear, but for gospel-repentance, whose nature consists in godly sorrow for sin, and leaving of it, proceeding from faith, love, and abhorrence of sin, that this should be hindered by this communion is not possible. I told you that the foundation of this communion is laid in a deep, serious, daily consideration of sin, its guilt, vileness, and abomination, and our own vileness on that account ; and that a sense hereof is to be kept alive upon the heart of every one that would enjoy this communion with Christ, for without it Christ is of no value. Now is it possible that a man should daily fill his heart with the thoughts of the vileness of sin, and be filled with self-abhorrence on this account, and yet be a stranger to godly sorrow ? Here is the mistake ; the foundation of this communion is laid in that which they suppose it overthrows.

But you will say, how should we address ourselves to the performance of this duty ? What path are we to walk in ? Faith exercises itself in it especially three ways.

1. In meditation. The heart goes over in its own thoughts the path above insisted on, sometimes severally, sometimes jointly ; sometimes fixing primarily on one thing, sometimes on another, and sometimes going over the whole. At one time perhaps the soul is most occupied in a consideration of its own sinfulness, and filling itself with shame and self-abhorrence on that account ; sometimes it is filled with the thoughts of the righteousness of Christ, and with joy unspeakable, especially on

great occasions; when grieved and burdened by negligence, or on the breaking out of corruption, then the soul goes over the whole work, and so drives things to an issue with God, and takes up the peace that Christ hath wrought out for him. 2. In considering and inquiring into the promises of the gospel, which hold out these things; the excellency, fulness, and suitableness of the righteousness of Christ, the rejection of all false righteousness, and the commutation made in the love of God. 3. In prayer, herein their souls go through this work day by day. And this communion have all the saints with the Lord Jesus, as to their acceptance with God.

CHAP. VI.

Of Communion with Christ in Holiness.

OUR communion with the Lord Jesus, as to the grace of sanctification, is next to be considered. And herein we must shew, 1. What are the peculiar actings of the Lord Christ as to this communion. And, 2. What is the duty of the saints herein.

1. There are several acts ascribed to the Lord Jesus in reference to this particular. As, (1.) His interceding with the Father, by virtue of his oblation in the behalf of his, that he would bestow the Holy Spirit on them. (2.) His prayer being granted, as the Father always hears him, he actually sends his Spirit into the hearts of his saints, there to dwell in his stead, and to do all things for them, and in them, which he himself hath to do. For this is the Lord Christ by faith to be looked to, and that not only in respect of the first enduing of our hearts with his Holy Spirit, but also of the continual supplies of it, drawing forth and exciting more effectual operations and actings of that indwelling Spirit. (3.) There is that which we call habitual grace, that is, the fruits of the Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit,"

John iii. 6. That which is produced by the Holy Ghost in the heart of a man when he is regenerate ; that which makes him so, is spirit ; in opposition to the flesh, or that enmity which is in us by nature against God. It is faith, love, joy, hope, and the rest of the graces of the gospel, in their root or common principle.

These things being premised, as to the nature of it, let us now consider what we are to eye in the Lord Jesus, in reference hereto, in order to our communion with him therein. (1.) As I said of the Spirit, so in the first place I say of this, it is of the purchase of Christ, and is so to be looked on. "It is given unto us, for his sake, to believe on him," Phil. i. 29. The Lord, on the behalf of Christ, for his sake, because it is purchased, and procured by him for us, bestows faith, and by the same rule, all grace upon us. Did we continually consider all grace as the fruit of the purchase of Christ, it would be an exceeding endearment on our spirits. Nor can we, without this consideration, according to the tenor of the gospel, ask or expect any grace. It is no prejudice to the free grace of the Father, to look on any thing as the purchase of the Son ; it was from that grace that he made that purchase. And in the receiving grace from God, we have not communion with Christ, who is the storehouse of it, unless we look upon it as his purchase. He hath obtained that we should have life in us ; be humble, holy, believing, by destroying the works of the devil in us. (2.) The Lord Christ doth actually communicate this grace unto his saints, and bestows it on them. For, the Father actually invests him with all the grace whereof he hath made a purchase, (as he received the promise of the Spirit,) which is all that is of use for the bringing his many sons to glory. "It pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell," Col. i. 17. That he should be invested with a fulness of that grace, which is needful for his people. Being thus actually vested with this power and fulness, he designs the Spirit to take of this fulness and to give it

unto us. "He shall take of mine and shew it unto you," John xvi. 15. The Spirit takes of that fulness that is in Christ, and in the name of the Lord Jesus bestows it actually on them, for whose sanctification he is sent.

2. How they hold communion with the Lord Christ, and wherein, shall now be declared. They continually eye the Lord Jesus as the great Joseph, that hath the disposal of all the granaries of the kingdom of heaven committed unto him; as one in whom it hath pleased the Father to gather all things unto an head, Ephes. i. 10, that from him all things might be dispensed unto them. All treasures, all fulness, the Spirit, not by measure, are in him. And this fulness, in reference to their condition, they eye in these three particulars:

(1.) In the preparation unto the dispensation mentioned, in the expiating, purging, purifying efficacy of his blood; it was a sacrifice not only of atonement as offered, but also of purification, as poured out. This the apostle eminently sets forth, Heb. ix. 13, 14, "For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your consciences from dead works, that you may serve the living God?" This blood of his is that which answers all typical institutions, for carnal purification, and therefore hath a spiritually purifying, cleansing, sanctifying virtue in itself, as offered and poured out. The saints see that in themselves they are still exceedingly defiled; and indeed to have a sight of the defilements of sin is a more spiritual discovery, than to have only a sense of the guilt of sin. This follows every conviction, and is commensurate to it, especially such as reveal the purity of God, and his ways. Hereupon they cry, with shame within themselves, Unclean, unclean! Unclean in their natures, unclean in their persons, unclean in their conversations. For the removal of this, they look in the first place to the purifying virtue of the

blood of Christ, which is able to “ cleanse them from all their sins,” 1 John i. 7 ; being the spring from whence floweth all the purifying virtue, which in the issue will take away all their spots and stains. This they dwell upon with thoughts of faith ; they roll it in their minds and spirits. Here faith obtains new life, new vigour, when a sense of vileness hath even overwhelmed it. Here is a fountain opened ; draw nigh, and see its beauty, purity, efficacy. Here is a foundation laid of that work, whose accomplishment we long for. One moment’s communion with Christ by faith herein, is more effectual to the purging of the soul, to the increasing of grace, than the utmost self-endeavours of a thousand ages.

(2.) They eye the blood of Christ as the blood of sprinkling ; without which there is no actual purification. This the apostle largely describes, Heb. ix. “ When Moses” (saith he,) “ had spoken every precept to the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant, which God hath enjoined unto you ; moreover, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry ; and almost all things are by the law purged with blood ; it was therefore necessary that the patterns of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these,” ver. 19, &c. He had formerly compared the blood of Christ to the blood of sacrifices, as offered in respect of the purchase it made ; now he compares it unto that blood as sprinkled, in respect of its application to purification and holiness. And he tells us how this sprinkling was performed, it was by dipping hyssop in the blood of the sacrifice, and so dashing it upon the things and persons to be purified. Hence David, in a sense of the pollution of sin, prays that he may be purged with hyssop, Psal. li. 7. For that this peculiarly respected the defilement of sin, is evident, because there is no mention made in the institu-

tion of any sacrifice, after that of the lamb before mentioned, of sprinkling blood with hyssop, but only in those which respected purification of uncleanness. Now, this branch of hyssop, wherein the blood of purification was prepared for the sprinkling the unclean, is, unto us, the free promises of Christ. The cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ lies in the promises, as the blood of sacrifices in the hyssop, ready to pass out to them that draw nigh thereto. Therefore the apostle argueth from receiving the promises to universal holiness. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,” 2 Cor. vii. 1. This then the saints do; they eye the blood of Christ as it is in the promise, ready to issue out upon the soul for the purification thereof; and thence is purging and cleansing virtue to be communicated to them, and by the blood of Christ are they to be purged from all their sins.

(3.) They look upon him, as he is the only dispenser of the Spirit, and of all the grace of sanctification and holiness. They consider, that upon his intercession it is granted to him that he should make effectual all the fruits of his purchase, to the sanctification, the purifying, and making glorious in holiness, of his people. They know that this is actually to be accomplished by the Spirit, according to the innumberable promises given to that purpose. He is to sprinkle that blood upon their souls; he is to create the holiness in them that they long after; he is to be himself in them “a well of water springing up to everlasting life.” In this state they look to Jesus; here faith fixes itself in expectation of his giving the Spirit for all these purposes; mixing the promises with faith, and so becoming actual partakers of all this grace. This is their way, this is their communion with Christ; this is the life of faith as to grace and holiness. Blessed is the soul that is exercised therein, “He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth forth her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be

careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit," Jer. xvii. 8. Convinced persons, who know not Christ, nor the fellowship of his sufferings, would spin an holiness out of their own bowels ; they would work it out in their own strength. They begin it with trying endeavours, and follow it with vows, duties, resolutions, engagements, sweating at it all the day long. Thus they continue for a season, and often end in apostasy. But the saints of God do, in the very entrance of their walking with him, reckon upon it, that they have a three-fold want.

1. Of the Spirit of holiness, to dwell in them. 2. Of an habit of holiness, to be infused into them. 3. Of actual assistance, to work all their works for them ; and that if these should continue to be wanting, they can never, with all their might, power, and endeavours, perform any one act of holiness before the Lord. They know that of themselves they have no sufficiency ; that "without Christ they can do nothing ;" therefore they look to him who is intrusted with a fulness of all these in their behalf, and thereupon by faith derive from him an increase of that whereof they stand in need. Thus, I say, have the saints communion with Christ, as to their holiness. From him do they receive the Spirit to dwell in them ; from him the *new* principle of life, which is the root of all their obedience ; from him have they actual assistance for every duty. In waiting for, and receiving these blessings, they spend their lives and time with him. In vain is help looked for from other mountains. In vain do men spend their strength in following after righteousness, if this be wanting. Fix thy soul here ! thou shalt not tarry until thou be ashamed. This is the way, the only way, to obtain full, effectual manifestations of the Spirit's dwelling in us ; to have our hearts purified, our consciences purged, our sins mortified, our graces increased, our souls made humble, holy, zealous, like to him ; to have our lives fruitful, our deaths comfortable ; let us herein abide, eyeing Christ by faith, to attain that

measure of conformity to him which is allotted us in this world, that when we shall “see him as he is, we may be like him.”

CHAP. VII.

Of Communion with Christ in Privileges.

The third thing wherein we have communion with Christ, is grace of privilege before God. The privileges we enjoy by Christ, are great and innumerable. To insist on them in particular would be work for a whole life. I shall take a view of them only in the head. This is our adoption: “Beloved, now we are the sons of God,” 1 John iii. 2. This is our great and fountain privilege. Whence is it that we are so? It is from the love of the Father; ver. 1, “Behold what love the Father hath given unto us, that we should be called the sons of God!” But by whom immediately do we receive this honour? “As many as believe on Christ, he gives them this power to become the sons of God,” John i. 12. Himself was appointed to be the “first-born among many brethren;” and his taking us to be brethren, makes us become the children of God. Now that God is our Father, by being the Father of Christ, and we his children, by being the brethren of Christ, being the head and sum of all the honour, privilege, and title we have, let us a little consider the nature of that act whereby we are invested with this, namely, our adoption.

Now adoption is the authoritative translation of a believer by Jesus Christ, from the family of the world and satan, into the family of God, with his investiture in all the privileges and advantages of that family. To the complete adoption of any person, these five things are required:—1. That he be actually, and of his own right, of another family than that whereinto he is adopted. He must be the son of one family or other in his own right,

as all persons are : 2. That there be a family unto which of himself he hath no right, wherinto he is to be grafted: 3. That there be an authoritative legal translation of him, by some that have power thereto, from one family into another. 4. That the adopted person be freed from all obligations to the family, from whence he is translated, otherwise he can be no way serviceable to the family wherinto he is engrafted. 5. That by virtue of his adoption, he be invested in all the rights, privileges, and title to the whole inheritance of the family into which he is adopted, in as full and ample a manner as if he had been born a son therein. Now all these circumstances concur, and are found in the adoption of believers.

1 They are, by their own original right, of another family than that wherinto they are adopted. They are by nature the children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3 ; sons of wrath ; of that family whose inheritance is wrath ; called “the power of darkness,” Col. i. 13 ; for from thence doth God “translate them into the kingdom of his dear Son.” This is the family of the world and of satan, of which by nature believers are. Whatever is to be inherited in that family, as wrath, the curse, death, hell, they have a right thereto.

2. There is another family wherinto they are to be translated, and whereunto, of themselves, they have neither right nor title. This is that family in heaven and earth which is called after the name of Christ, Eph. iii. 15 ; the great family of God : God hath an house and family for his children, of whom some he maintains on the riches of his grace, and some he entertains with the fulness of his glory. This is that house whereof the Lord Christ is the great dispenser, it having pleased the Father “to gather together in one all things in him, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in him,” Eph. i. 10. Herein live all the sons and daughters of God, spending largely on the riches of his grace. Unto this family, of themselves, they have no right nor title, they are wholly alienated from it, Eph. ii. 12, and can law

no claim to any thing in it. God driving fallen Adam out of the garden, and shutting up all ways of return with a flaming sword, abundantly declares that he, and all in him, had lost all right of approaching to God in a family relation. Corrupted, cursed nature is not vested with the least right to any thing of God ; therefore they have an authoritative translation from one of these families to another : a judicial exalting into that family where God is the Father, Christ the elder brother, all saints and angels brethren, and fellow-children, and the inheritance a crown immortal and incorruptible, that fades not away.

Now this, as unto us, hath sundry acts. (1.) The giving a believer a new name in a white stone, Rev. ii. 17 : they that are adopted are to take new names ; they change the names they had in their old families, to take the names of the families whereinto they are translated. This new name is, A child of God ; that is the new name given in adoption ; and no man knoweth what is in that name but only he that doth receive it. And this new name is given, and written in a white stone ; that is the *tessera* of our admission into the house of God. It is a stone of judicial acquitment. Our adoption by the Spirit is grounded on our absolution in the blood of Jesus, and therefore is the new name in the white stone ; privilege grounded on discharge. The white stone quits the claim of the old family ; the new name gives entrance to the other. (2.) An enrolling of his name in the catalogue of the household of God, admitting him thereby into fellowship therein. (3.) Testifying to his conscience his acceptance with God, enabling him to behave himself as a child.

3. The two last things required to adoption are, that the adopted person be freed from all obligations to the family from whence he is translated, and invested with the rights and privileges of that whereto he is translated. Now, because these two comprise the whole issue of adoption, wherein the saints have communion with Christ, I shall handle them together, referring the concernments

of them unto these four heads :—Liberty ; title, or right ; boldness ; correction : these are the things the adopted person receives by his adoption, wherein he holds communion with the Lord Jesus.

1. Liberty. The Spirit of the Lord, that was upon the Lord Jesus, anointed him to proclaim liberty to the captives, Isai. lxi. 1 ; “and where the Spirit of God is,” that is, the Spirit of Christ, given to us by him because we are sons, “there is liberty,” 2 Cor. iii. 17. All spiritual liberty is from the Spirit of adoption. Whatever else is pretended is licentiousness. So the apostle argues, Gal. iv. 6, 7, “He hath sent forth his Spirit into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;” wherefore ye are no more servants,” no more in bondage, but have the liberty of sons.

(1.) Believers are freed from the instituted law of ordinances, which, upon the testimony of the apostles, was a yoke which “neither they nor their fathers,” in the faith, “could bear,” Acts xv. 10. Wherefore Christ blotted out this hand-writing of ordinances that was against them, which was contrary to them, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross, Col. ii. 14; and thereupon the apostle, after a long dispute concerning the liberty that we have from that law, concludes with this instruction, Gal. v. 1, “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”

(2.) In reference to the moral law. The first thing we have liberty from is its rigour and terror in commanding, Heb. xii. 18—22 ; “We are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, to the whirlwind, darkness, and tempest, to the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words, which they that heard besought that they might hear it no more ; but we are come to mount Sion,” &c. As to that administration of the law wherein it was given out with dread and terror, and so exacted its obedience with rigour, we are freed from it, we are not called to that estate.

Secondly, from the impossibility of the accomplishment,

and its insufficiency for its primitive end by reason of sin. Or we are freed from the law as the instrument of righteousness, since by the impossibility of our fulfilling it, it is become insufficient for any such purpose, Rom. viii. 3, Gal. iii. 21, 23. There being an impossibility of obtaining life by the law, we are exempted from it as to any such end, and that by the blood and righteousness of Christ, Rom. viii. 3. And we are freed, thirdly, from the issue of its transgression.

There is a liberty in the family of God, as well as a liberty from the family of satan. Sons are free, their obedience is a free obedience, they have the Spirit of the Lord, opposed to the Spirit of bondage, Rom. viii. 15. Now this liberty of our Father's family, which we have as sons and children, being adopted by Christ through the Spirit, is a spiritual largeness of heart, whereby the children of God freely, willingly, genuinely, without fear, terror, bondage, and constraint, go forth unto all holy obedience in Christ. This son-like freedom of the spirit in obedience, consists in sundry things.

First, In the principles of all spiritual service, which are life and love; the one respecting the matter of their obedience, giving them power; the other respecting the manner of their obedience, giving them joy and sweetness in it. (1.) It is from life, that gives them power as to the matter of obedience, Rom. viii. 2. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets them free from the law of sin and death," it frees them, it carries them out to all obedience freely. So that they walk after the Spirit, ver. 1, that being the principle of their workings, Gal. ii. 20, "Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God;" the life which I now live in the flesh, that is, the obedience which I yield unto God, whilst I am in the flesh, it is from a principle of life, Christ living in me. There is then power for all living unto God, from Christ in them, the Spirit of life, from Christ carrying them out thereto.

Hence you may see the difference between the liberty

that slaves assume, and the liberty which is due to children. Slaves take liberty from duty ; children have liberty in duty ; there is not a greater mistake in the world, than that the liberty of sons in the house of God, consists in this, that they can perform duties, or take the freedom to omit them ; they can serve in the family of God ; that is, they think they may if they will, and they can choose whether they will or not. This is a liberty stolen by slaves, not a liberty given by the Spirit unto sons. The liberty of sons is in the inward spiritual freedom of their hearts, naturally and kindly going out in all the ways and worship of God. When they find themselves straitened, and shut up in them, they wrestle with God for enlargement, and are never content with the doing a duty, unless it be done as in Christ, with free, genuine, and enlarged hearts. The liberty that servants have is from duty, the liberty given to sons is in duty.

Again, the liberty of slaves, or servants, is from mistaken deceiving conclusions ; the liberty of sons is from the power of the indwelling Spirit of grace ; or the liberty of servants is from outward dead conclusions, the liberty of sons from an inward living principle.

(2.) Love, as to the manner of their obedience, gives them delight and joy. 1. Love is the source of all their duties, hence our Saviour resolves all obedience into the love of God, and our neighbour ; and St. Paul upon the same ground tells us, "That love is the fulfilling of the law." Where love is in any duty, it is complete in Christ. How often doth David, even with admiration, express this principle of his walking with God ; "Oh," saith he, "how I love thy commandments!" This gives saints delight, that the commandments of Christ are not grievous to them. Jacob's hard service was not grievous to him, because of his love to Rachel ; no duty of a saint is grievous to him, because of his love to Christ. They do from hence all things with delight and complacency, hence do they long for advantages of walking with God, pant after more ability, and this is a great part of their son-like

freedom in obedience. It gives them joy in it ; there is no fear in love, "but perfect love casteth out fear ;" when the soul is influenced to obedience by love, it expels that fear which is the issue of bondage. Now when there is a concurrence of these two, life and love, there is freedom, liberty, largeness of heart, exceedingly distanced from that strait and bondaged frame, which many walk in all their days. 2. The object of their obedience is represented to them as desirable, when to others it is terrible. In all their approaches to God, they eye him as a Father ; they call him Father, Gal. iv. 6, not in a form of words, but in the spirit of sons. God in Christ is continually before them, not only as one deserving all the honour and obedience which he requires, but also as one exceedingly to be delighted in, as being all-sufficient to satisfy all the desires of the soul ; when others bury their talents, as having to deal with an austere master, they draw out their strength to the uttermost, as drawing nigh to a gracious rewarder. They go from the principle of life and love, to the bosom of a living and loving Father ; they do but return the strength they receive unto the fountain, unto the ocean. 3. Their motive to obedience is love, 2 Cor. v. 14 : from an apprehension of love they are effectually carried out by love, to give up themselves unto him who is love. What a freedom is this ? What a largeness of spirit is in them who walk according to this rule ? Darkness, fear, bondage, conviction, accompany others in their ways ; the sons by the spirit of adoption have light, love with complacency in all their walking with God ; the world is an universal stranger to the frame of children towards their Father's house. 4. The manner of their obedience is willingness. They yield themselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, Rom. vi. 13 ; they yield themselves, give up themselves willingly, cheerfully, freely ; "with my whole heart," saith David ; they present themselves a living sacrifice, and a willing sacrifice. 5. The rule of their walking with God, is the law of liberty, as divested of all its terrifying, threatening, con-

demning, cursing power, and rendered in the blood of Jesus, sweet, tender, useful, directing, helpful as a rule of walking in the life they have received, and earnestly seeking the life they have not. I might give more instances. These may suffice to manifest that liberty of obedience in the family of God, which his sons and daughters have, that the poor Gibeonites are not acquainted with.

2. The second thing which the children of God have by adoption, is title. They have a title to all the privileges of the family whereto they are translated ; this is the pre-eminence of the true sons of any family. The ground on which Sarah pleaded the ejection of Ishmael, was, that he was the son of the bondwoman, Gen. xxi. 10 ; and so no genuine child of the family, and therefore could have no right of heirship with Isaac. The apostle's arguing is, "We are no more servants, but sons, and if sons, then heirs," Gal. iv. 7, then have we right and title, and being not born hereunto (for "by nature we are the children of wrath") we have this right by our adoption. Now the saints hereby have a double right and title ; proper and direct, in respect of spirituals : consequential, in respect of temporals.

(1.) They have a title unto the whole administration of the family of God here. The supreme administration of the house of God, is in the hand of the Lord Christ ; as to the institution of ordinances and dispensation of the Spirit, to enliven those ordinances for the end of their institution. And hereof they are the prime objects, all this is for them ; and exercised towards them ; God hath given Jesus Christ to be the "head over all things unto the church, which is his body," Eph. i. 22, 23. He hath made him the head over all these spiritual things, committed the authoritative administration of them all unto him, to the use and behoof of the church, that is, the family of God. This is the aim of the Lord Christ in the institution of all gospel-ordinances, that they may be of

use for the house and family of God, and all his children and servants therein.

They, and they only, have right and title to God's administrations, and the privileges of the family of God, as they are held out in his church according to his mind. The church is the house of God ; herein he keeps and maintains his whole family, ordering them according to his will. Now, who shall have any right in the house of God, but his children ? We will not allow a right to any but our own children in our houses ; will God, think you, allow any right in his house, but to his children ? " Is it meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto dogs ?" We shall see that none but children have any title to the privileges and advantages of the house of God, if we consider, 1. The nature of that house : it is made up of such persons, that it is impossible any but adopted children should have right to a place in it ; it is composed of " living stones," 1 Pet. ii. 5. " A chosen generation, a royal people, a holy nation, a peculiar people," ver. 9. A people that are all righteous, Isa. lx. 21. The way of the house is a way of holiness, which the unclean shall not pass through, chap. xxxv. 8. Yea, expressly they are the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. It is true that oftentimes at unawares other persons creep into the great house of God ; and so there becomes in it not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, &c. 2 Tim. ii. 20. But they only creep in, as Jude speaks, ver. 4, they have no right nor title to it. 2. The privileges of the house are such as will not suit nor profit any other. To what purpose is it to give food to a dead man ? Will he grow strong by it ? The things of the family and house of God, are food for living souls. What will outward signs avail, if life and power be away ? Look upon what particular you please of the saints' enjoyments in the family of God, you shall find them all suited to believers, and being bestowed on the world, would be pearls in the

snouts of swine. It is then only the sons of the family that have this right ; they have fellowship with one another, and with the Father and the Son Jesus Christ. They "set forth the Lord's death till he come ;" they are entrusted with all the ordinances of the house, and the administration of them ; and who shall deny them the enjoyment of this right, or keep them from what Christ hath purchased for them ? 3. They have a title to the future fulness of the inheritance that is purchased for this whole family by Jesus Christ. If you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, "and heirs according to the promise," Gal. iii. 29 : heirs of the promise, that is, of all things promised unto Abraham in and with Christ.

(2.) Besides this principal, the adopted sons of God have a consequential right unto the things of this world, that is, unto the portions of it, which God is pleased to entrust them with. Christ "is the heir of all things," Heb. i. 3. All title to the things of the creation was lost and forfeited by sin. The Lord by his sovereignty, had made an original grant of all things here below for man's use. Sin reversed this whole grant ; all things were set at liberty from the subjection unto him ; yet that liberty being a taking them off from the end to which they were originally appointed, is a part of their vanity and curse. It is evil to any thing to be laid aside as to the end to which it was primitively appointed ; by this means the whole creation is turned loose from any subordinate ruler ; and man having lost the whole title whereby he held his dominion over, and possession of the creatures, hath not the least colour of interest in any one of them, nor can lay any claim unto them ; but now the Lord, intending to take a portion to himself, out of fallen mankind, to be heirs of salvation, he doth not immediately destroy the works of creation, but reserve them for their use in their pilgrimage. To this end he invests the whole right and title of them in the second Adam, which the first had lost ; he appoints him heir of all things. And thereupon his adopted ones, being fellow-heirs with

Christ, come also to have a right unto the things of this creation.

This they have by their adoption, that, 1. Look what portion soever God is pleased to give them, they have a right unto it, as it is re-invested in Christ, and not as it lies wholly under the curse and vanity that is come upon the creation by sin, and therefore can never be called to an account for usurping that which they have no right to, as shall all the sons of men, who violently grasp those things which God hath set at liberty from under their dominion. 2. By this their right they are led to a sanctified use of what thereby they enjoy, inasmuch as the things themselves are to them pledges of the Father's love, washed in the blood of Christ, and endearments upon their spirits to live to his praise, "who gives them all things richly to enjoy."

Unbelievers have no true right to any thing of what kind soever that they possess. They have no true right even to the temporal things they possess; it is true they have a civil right in respect of others, but they have not a sanctified right in respect of their own souls. They have a right that will hold plea in the courts of men, but not a right that will hold in the court of God, and in their own conscience. It will one day be sad with them, when they shall come to give an account of their enjoyments. When the God of glory shall come home to any of them, either in their consciences here, or in the judgment that is to come, and speak with terror: I have suffered you to enjoy corn, wine, and oil, a great portion of my creatures; you have rolled yourselves in wealth and prosperity, when the right heirs of these things lived poor, and low, and mean at the next doors; give in now an answer, what and how you have used these things, what have you laid out for the advancement of the gospel? What have you given unto them for whom nothing was provided? What contribution have you made for the poor saints? Have you had a ready hand, and willing mind to lay down all for my sake? They shall be

compelled to answer as the truth is ; Lord, we had indeed a large portion in the world, but we took it to be our own, and thought we might have done what we would with our own ; we have eat the fat, and drank the sweet, and left the rest of our substance for our babes ; we have spent somewhat upon our lusts, somewhat upon our friends, but the truth is, we cannot say that we have made friends of this unrighteous mammon, that we used it to the advancement of the gospel, or for ministering unto thy poor saints.

3. Boldness with God by Christ is another privilege of our adoption ; but hereof I have spoke at large before.

4. Affliction also as proceeding from love, as leading to spiritual advantages, as conforming to Christ, as sweetened with his presence, is the privilege of children, Heb. xii. 4—6.

This, I say, is the head and source of all the privileges which Christ hath purchased for us, wherein also we have fellowship with him ; fellowship in name ; we are, as he is, sons of God : fellowship in title ; we are heirs, co-heirs with Christ : fellowship in likeness and conformity ; we are like the first-born of the family : fellowship in honour ; “ he is not ashamed to call us brethren :” fellowship in sufferings : “ he learned obedience by what he suffered ;” and every son is to be scourged that is received : fellowship in his kingdom ; we shall reign with him.

OR

COMMUNION WITH GOD, &c.

PART III.

CHAP. I.

The Foundation of our Communion with the Holy Ghost.

THE foundation of all our communion with the Holy Ghost consisting in his mission, or being sent to be our Comforter by Jesus Christ, the whole matter of that economy or dispensation is first to be considered, that so we may have a right understanding of the truth inquired after. Now the main promise hercof being given, John xvi. I shall take a view of it as there proposcd.

Our blessed Saviour being to leave the world, having acquainted his disciples what entertainment they were like to find in it, gives the reason why he now gave them the tidings of it, ver. 1, “These things have I spoken, that you should not be offended;” lest you should be surprised, so as to be offended at me, and fall away from me. You are now forewarned what you have to look for. Yea, saith he, ver. 2, having acquainted you in general,

that you shall be persecuted, I tell you plainly, that there shall be a combination of all men against you, “ They shall cast you out of the synagogue, and the time shall come, that whosoever kills you, will think that he doth God good service. These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, you may remember I told you of them. And these things I said not at the beginning, because I was present with you :” but now the state of things is altered ; “ I must leave you,” ver. 5. And for your parts, so are you astonished, that ye do not ask me whither I go, the consideration whereof would relieve you, seeing I go to carry on the work of your salvation ; but your hearts are filled with sorrow, and you do not so much as inquire after relief, ver. 5, 6; whereupon he adjoins that wonderful assertion, ver. 7, “ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

This verse, then, being the peculiar foundation of what shall afterward be declared, must particularly be considered ; and that both with respect to the preface and the asseveration, with the reason annexed.

1. The preface. “ I tell you the truth.” The words are exceeding emphatical. *I* tell it you ; I who love you, who take care of you, who am now about to lay down my life for you ; they are my dying words, that you may believe me ; I who am truth itself, I tell you. And “ I tell you the truth.” You have many apprehensions of things ; you think if I would abide with you, all these evils might be prevented ; but alas ! you know not what is good for you, nor what is expedient. “ I tell you the truth ;” this is truth itself, and quiet your hearts in it.

2. The assertion itself follows ; “ It is expedient for you that I go away.” There are two things in the words ; Christ’s departure, and the usefulness of it to his disciples. (1.) For his departure, it is known what is intended by it : the withdrawing his bodily presence from the earth after his resurrection, the heavens being to receive him,

“until the times of the restitution of all things.” Of this, saith he, it is profitable for you, it is for your advantage, it will answer the end that you aim at. (2.) Now, although it might be expected that they should acquiesce in this asseveration of truth itself, yet because they were generally concerned in the ground of the truth of it, he acquaints them with that also; “If I go not away, the Comforter, will not come; but if I depart, I will send him.” ‘Ο παρακλητός, the word being of sundry significations, many translators have thought fit not to restrain it, but retain the original word *Paracletus*. In Scripture it hath two eminent significations, an *Advocate* and a *Comforter*; in the first sense our Saviour is called παρακλητός, 1 John ii. 1, whether it be better rendered here an *Advocate* or a *Comforter*, may be doubted. Look into the foregoing occasion of the words, which is the disciples’ sorrow and trouble, and it seems to require the *Comforter*; sorrow hath filled your hearts, but I will send you the *Comforter*; but look into the next words following, which contain his peculiar work, for which he is now promised to be sent, and they require he should be an *Advocate*, to plead the cause of Christ against the world, ver. 8. I shall choose rather to interpret the promise by the occasion of it, which was the sorrow of his disciples, and to retain the name of the *Comforter*.

Who this *Comforter* is, our blessed Saviour had before declared, chap. xv. 26. He is “the Spirit of truth,” that is, the Holy Ghost, who revealed all Divine truth to the sons of men.

Now of this *Comforter* two things are affirmed, 1. That he shall come. 2. That Christ shall send him.

1. That he shall come; the affirmative of his coming on the performance of that condition of it, of Christ’s going away, is included in the negation of his coming, without its accomplishment, “If I go not away, he will not come;” if I do go, “He will come;” so that there is not only the mission of Christ, but the will of the Spirit in his coming; “He will come;” his own will is in his

work. 2. "I will send him ;" the mystery of sending the Spirit, our Saviour instructs his disciples in by degrees, chap. xiv. 16. He saith, "I will pray the Father, he shall give you another Comforter." In the progress of his discourse he gets one step more upon their faith, ver. 26 ; "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name :" but, chap. xv. 26, he saith, "I will send him from the Father ;" and here absolutely, "I will send him." The business of sending the Holy Ghost by Christ was a deep mystery, which at once they could not bear ; and therefore he thus instructs them in it by degrees.

This is the sum ; the presence of the Holy Ghost with believers as a Comforter sent by Christ for those ends for which he is promised, is more profitable for believers, than any corporal presence of Christ could be.

Now, the Holy Spirit is promised under a two-fold consideration. First, As a Spirit of sanctification to convert us, and make us believers. Secondly, As a Spirit of consolation to believers, to give them the privileges of the death and purchase of Christ : it is in the latter sense only wherein he is here spoken of. Now, as to his presence with us in this regard, observe, 1. The rise and fountain of it. 2. The manner of his being given. 3. Our manner of receiving him. 4. His abiding with us. 5. His acting in us. 6. What are the effects of his working in us. And then, how we hold communion with him, will from all these appear. What the Scripture speaketh to these particulars, shall briefly be considered.

1. For the fountain of his coming, it is mentioned, John xv. 26, "He proceedeth from the Father ;" this is the fountain of this dispensation, he proceedeth from the Father ; now there is a two-fold procession of the Spirit. (1.) In respect of substance and personality. (2.) In respect of the work of grace : of the first, in which respect he is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, proceeding from both eternally, I speak not. His pro-

ceeding mentioned in this place, is his economical or dispensatory proceeding for the carrying on the work of grace; it is spoken of him in reference to his being sent by Christ after his ascension. As God is said to "arise out of his place," Isa. xxvi. 21, not in regard of any mutation in him, but of the new work which he would effect; so it follows, the Lord comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth. And it is in reference to a peculiar work that he is said to proceed, namely, to testify of Christ; which cannot be assigned to him in respect of his eternal procession, but of his actual dispensation.

Three things are considerable in the foundation of this dispensation, in reference to our communion with the Holy Ghost. First, That the will of the Spirit is in the work; he comes forth himself; he of himself and of his own accord proceedeth. Secondly, The condescension of the Holy Ghost in this order of working, to proceed from the Father and Son; to take upon him this work of a Comforter, as the Son did the work of a Redeemer. Thirdly, The fountain of the whole is discovered to be the Father, that we may know his works in the pursuit of the love which every where is ascribed to the Father. This is the door and entrance of that fellowship of the Holy Ghost, whereunto we are called. His gracious and blessed will, his infinite and ineffable condescension being eyed by faith, as the foundation of all those effects which he works in us, and privileges whereof by him we are made partakers, our souls are peculiarly conversant with him, and their desires, affections, and thankfulness, terminated in him. This is the first thing considerable in our communion with the Holy Ghost.

2. The manner of his being bestowed, or the manner of the communication of him unto us from this fountain, is variously expressed to denote three things: (1.) The freeness of it: thus he is said to be given, John xiv. 16, "He shall give you another Comforter;" he will "give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." That which is of

gift is free, the Spirit of grace is given of grace ; and not only the Spirit of sanctification, or the Spirit to sanctify and convert us, is a gift of free grace, but in the sense whereof we speak in respect of consolation, he is of gift also ; he is promised to be given unto believers. He is freely bestowed, and freely works. And the different measures whercin he is received for those ends of consolation which we shall consider, by believers, which are great, various, and inexpressible, arise from hence, that we have him by free gift. And this is the tenor whereby we hold and enjoy him : a tenour of free donation. So is he to be eyed, so to be asked, so to be received. (2.) The authority of it ; thence he is said to be sent ; chap. xiv. 26, “ The Father will send him in my name : ” and chap. xv. 26, “ I will send him unto you from the Father, ” and “ him will I send to you, ” chap. xvi. 17. This mission of the Holy Ghost by the Father and the Son, as it answers the order of the Persons’ subsistence in the blessed Trinity, and his procession from them both, so the order voluntarily engaged in by them, for the accomplishment, as was said, of the work of our salvation. There is in it, in a most special manner, the condescension of the Holy Ghost, in his love to us, to the authoritative delegation of Father and Son in this business ; which argues not a disparity, or inequality of essence, but of office, in this work. It is the office of the Holy Ghost to be an Advocate for us, and a Comforter to us ; in which respect, not absolutely, he is thus sent authoritatively by Father and Son. (3.) He is said to be poured out, or shed on us, Tit. iii. 6, that Holy Ghost which he hath “ richly poured out upon us, ” or shed on us abundantly. And this was the chief expression of his communication under the Old Testament, the mystery of the Father and the Son and the matter of commission and delegation being then not so nearly discovered, Isa. xxxii. 15, “ Until the Spirit be poured on us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruit-

ful field be counted for a forest ;" that is, till the Gentiles be called, and the Jews rejected : and, chap. xlivi. 3, " I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring." Now this expression, as is known, is taken from the allusion of the Spirit unto water, and that in relation to all the uses of water, both natural and typical : perhaps efficacy and plenty are chiefly intended.

This three-fold expression of *giving, sending, and pouring out* of the Spirit, gives us the three great properties of the covenant of grace : 1. That it is free, he is given : 2. That it is orderly, " ordered in all things and sure ;" from the love of the Father, by the procurement of the Son ; and thence is that variety of expression, of the Father's sending him, and the Son's sending him from the Father ; he being the gift of the Father's love, and the purchase of the blood of the Son : 3. The efficacy of it.

3. Our receiving of him, as a Spirit of sanctification, is a mere passive reception, as a vessel receives water. He comes as the wind on Ezekiel's dead bones, and makes them live. He comes into dead hearts, and quickens them, by an act of his almighty power. But as he is the Spirit of consolation, it is otherwise ; there is an active power to be put forth in his reception for consolation, though not in his reception for regeneration and sanctification. And this is the power of faith ; so Gal. iii. 2, they " received the Spirit by the hearing of faith ;" the preaching of the gospel begetting faith in them, enabled them to receive the Spirit. Hence believing is put as the qualification of all our receiving the Holy Ghost, John vii. 39, " This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive :" it is believers that thus receive the Spirit ; and they receive him by faith.

Now there are three special acts of faith, whereby it goes forth in the receiving of the Spirit. (1.) It considers the Spirit in the economy before described as promised. It is faith alone that makes profit of the benefit

of the promises, Heb. iv. 2; now he is called the “Spirit of that promise,” Eph. ii. 12, the Spirit that in the covenant is promised, and “we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,” Gal. iii. 14, so that the receiving of the Spirit through faith, is the receiving of him as promised. Faith eyes the promise of God, and of Jesus Christ, of sending the Spirit for all those ends for which he is desired; thus it depends, and waits, mixing the promise with itself until it receives him. (2.) By prayer; he is given as a Spirit of supplication, that we may ask him as a Spirit of consolation, Luke xi. 13, and indeed this asking of the Spirit of God, in the name of Christ, is the chief work of faith in this world. (3.) It cherisheth him, by attending to his motions, improving his actings according to his will.

4. The next thing is his abode with us; now this is two ways expressed in the Scriptures. (1.) In general, as to the thing itself, it is said, “He shall abide with us.” (2.) In particular, as to the manner of his abiding, it is by habitation or indwelling. He is said to dwell in us chiefly, or perhaps solely, as he is a Spirit of sanctification; which is evident from the work he doth as indwelling: he quickeneth and sanctifieth, Rom. viii. 11, and the manner of his indwelling is as in a temple, which he makes holy thereby, 2 Cor. vi. 16, but yet the general notion of it in abiding is ascribed to him as a Comforter, John xiv. 16, “He shall abide with you for ever.”

1. He is promised to abide with the disciples for ever, in opposition to the abode of Christ: Christ in the flesh, had been with them for a little while, and now was leaving them and going to his Father. He had been the Comforter immediately himself for a season, but is now upon his departing; wherefore promising them another Comforter, they might fear that he would but visit them for a little season also, and then their condition would be worse than ever. Nay, but saith our Saviour, fear it not,

this is the last dispensation. There is to be no alteration ; when I am gone the Comforter is to do all the remaining work. There is not another to be looked for, and I promise you him ; nor shall he depart from you, but always abide with you. 2. The Comforter may always abide with us, though not always comfort us ; he who is the Comforter may abide, though he do not always that work : for other purposes he is always with us, as to make us holy.

Having thus declared from whence, and how the Holy Ghost is given unto us as a Spirit of consolation ; I come,—

5. To declare what are his actings in us, and towards us, being so bestowed on us, and received by us. Here are two general heads to be considered. (1.) The manner and kind of his actings in us, which are variously expressed : and, (2.) The particular products of his actings in our souls, wherein we have communion with him. The first is variously expressed : I shall pass through them briefly.

1. He is said, *ενεργειν*, *to work effectually*, 1 Cor. xii. 11, all these worketh or effecteth that one and self-same Spirit. It is spoken there indeed in respect of his distribution of gifts, but the way is the same for the communication of graces and privileges. He doth it by working, which as it proves his personality, especially as considered with the words following, dividing to every man according to his will, (for to work according to will is the inseparable property of a person, and is spoken expressly of God, Eph. i. 11,) so in relation to verse 6, foregoing, it makes no less evident his Deity. What he is here said to do as the Spirit bestowed on us, and given unto us ; there is he said as God himself to do. “There are diversities of operations, but it is one God that worketh all in all ;” which here in other words is, “All these worketh the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man as he will.”

2. In the same verse, as to the manner of his operation, he is said, *διαιρεσθε, he divideth, or distributeth to every one as he will.* This of distributing adds to that of operation, choice, judgment, and freedom. He that distributes variously, doth it with choice, and judgment, and freedom of will ; such are the proceedings of the Spirit in his dispensations ; to one he giveth one thing eminently, to another another : to one in one degree, to another in another. Thus are the saints kept in a constant dependence on him ; he distributes as he will ; who should not be content with his portion ? What claim can any lay to that which he distributeth as he will ? Which is farther manifested,

3. By his being said to give, when and what he bestows ; they spake with other tongues, “ as the Spirit gave them utterance,” Acts ii. 4. He gave them to them, that is, freely ; whatever he bestows upon us is of his gift. And hence it is to be observed, that in the economy of our salvation, the acting of no one person doth prejudice the liberty of any other ; so the love of the Father in sending the Son is free, and his sending doth no ways prejudice the liberty and love of the Son, but that he lays down his life freely also. So the satisfaction and purchas made by the Son, doth no way prejudice the freedom of the Father’s grace in pardoning and accepting us thereupon. So the Father’s and Son’s sending of the Spirit doth not derogate from his freedom in his workings, but he gives freely what he gives. And the reason of this is, because the will of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is essentially the same ; so that in the acting of one there is the counsel of all, and each freely therein.

That which remains in the last place to be explained, as the foundation of the communion which we have with the Holy Ghost, is the effects that he produces, which I shall not cast into any artificial method, but take them as I find them lying scattered up and down in the Scripture, only descending from those which are more general to those which are more particular, neither aiming nor

desiring to gather all the severals, but insisting on those which most obviously occur. Only as formerly, so now you must observe that I speak of the Spirit, principally, if not only as a Comforter.

CHAP. II.

Of the Things wherein we have Communion with the Holy Ghost.

THE things which in the foregoing chapters I called effects of the Holy Ghost in us, or towards us, are the things wherein we hold peculiar fellowship with him as our Comforter.

1. The first and most general is that of John xiv. 26, “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, that I have spoken to you.” There are two parts of this promise. (1.) Of teaching. (2.) Of bringing to remembrance. Of his teaching I shall speak afterwards.

His bringing the things to remembrance that Christ spake, is the first general promise of him as a Comforter; now this also may be considered two ways: (1.) Merely in respect of the things spoken themselves. So our Saviour here promiseth his apostles, that the Holy Ghost should bring to their minds, by an immediate efficacy, the things that he had spoken, that by his inspiration they might be enabled to write and preach them for the good of his church. Wherefore Christ promises that the Holy Ghost shall do his work, that they might infallibly give out what he had delivered to them. (2.) In respect of the comfort of what he had spoken, which seems to be a great part of the promise. He had been speaking to them things suited for their consolation; giving them precious promises of the supplies they should have from him; of the love of the Father, of the glory he was providing for them, the sense and comfort whereof is

unspeakable. But, saith he, I know how unable you are to make use of these things for your own consolation ; the Spirit therefore shall recover them upon your minds in their full strength and vigour for that end. And this is one cause why it was expedient for believers, that Christ's bodily absence should be supplied by the presence of the Spirit. And this is his work to the end of the world, to bring the promises of Christ to our minds, to give us the comfort of them, the joy and sweetness of them, much beyond that which the disciples found in them, when Christ in person spake them to them. Here we see the immediate spring of all the spiritual comfort we have, and the fellowship which we have with the Holy Ghost therein.

2. The next general work seems to be that of John xvi. 14, "The Comforter shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." The work of the Spirit is to glorify Christ. We may see how far that Spirit is from being the Comforter, who sets up himself in the room of Christ ; such a spirit as, saith he, is all himself : for as for him that suffered at Jerusalem, it is no matter that we trouble ourselves about him ; this spirit is now all. This is not the Comforter ; his work is to glorify Christ, him that sends him. And this is an evident sign of a false spirit ; whatever its pretence be, if it glorify not that Christ who was now speaking to his apostles ; and such are many that are gone abroad in the world. But what shall this Spirit do, that Christ may be glorified ? "He shall," saith he, "take of mine ;" what these things are is declared in the next verse, "All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore I said, he shall take of mine." It is not of the essence of the Father and Son that our Saviour speaks, but of the grace which is communicated to us by them. This Christ calls "my things," being the fruit of his purchase and mediation : on which account he saith all his Father's things are his ; that is, the things that the Father, in his eternal love, hath provided to be dispensed in the

blood of his Son. These, said he, the Comforter shall receive: that is, they shall be committed unto him to dispense for your advantage. So it follows, "He shall shew," or declare, and make them known to you. Thus then he is a Comforter. He reveals to the souls of believers the good things which the Father hath provided, and the Son purchased. These things he effectually declares to the souls of believers, and makes them know them for their own good. Then is Christ magnified and glorified in their hearts; then they know what a Saviour and Redeemer he is. A soul doth never glorify Christ upon a sense of the eternal redemption he hath purchased, but it is in him a peculiar effect of the Holy Ghost as our Comforter. "No man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. 3.

3. "He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts," Rom. v. 5. It is the love of God to us, not our love to God, which is here intended. The Comforter gives a sweet and plentiful evidence of God to us, such as the soul is delighted, satiated with. This is his work, and he doth it effectually. To give a poor sinful person a comfortable persuasion, affecting it throughout, in all its faculties and affections that God in Jesus Christ loves him, delights in him, is well pleased with him, hath thoughts of tenderness and kindness towards him: to give him, I say, an overflowing sense hereof, is an inexpressible mercy. This we have, in a peculiar manner, by the Holy Ghost; it is his proper work. As all his works are works of love and kindness, so this of communicating a sense of the love of the Father, mixes itself with all the particulars of his actings. And as we have herein peculiar communion with himself, so by him we have communion with the Father, even in his love, which is thus shed abroad in our hearts: so not only do we rejoice in, and glorify the Holy Ghost which doth this work; but in him also whose love it is. Thus it is also in respect of the Son; in his taking of his, and shewing

of it unto us. What we have of heaven in this world lies herein.

4. Another effect we have of his, Rom. viii. 16, "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." You know whose children we are by nature; children of satan, and of the curse, or of wrath. By the Spirit we are put into another capacity, and are adopted to be the children of God, inasmuch as by receiving the Spirit of our Father, we become the children of our Father. Thence is he called, ver. 15, "The Spirit of adoption." Now, sometimes the soul, because it hath somewhat remaining in it of the principle that it had in its old condition, is put to question, whether it be a child of God or not; and thereupon, as in a thing of the greatest importance, puts in its claim, with all the evidences that it hath to make good its title. The Spirit comes and bears witness in this case. It is an allusion to judicial proceedings in point of titles. The judge being set, the person concerned lays his claim, produceth his evidences, and pleads them; his adversaries endeavouring all that in them lies to disannul his plea. In the midst of the trial, a person of known and approved integrity comes into the court, and gives testimony fully and directly on behalf of the claimer, which stops the mouths of all his adversaries, and fills the man with joy and satisfaction. So is it in this case. The soul, by the power of its own conscience, is brought before the law of God; there a man puts in his plea, that he is a child of God, that he belongs to God's family; and for this end produceth all his evidences, every thing, whereby faith gives him an interest in God. Satan, in the mean time, opposeth with all his might; many flaws are found in his evidences; the truth of them all is questioned, and the soul hangs in suspense as to the issue. In the midst of the contest the Comforter comes; and overpowers the heart with a comfortable persuasion, and bears down all objections, that his plea is good, and that he is a child of God. When our spirits are pleading their right and title,

he comes in and bears witness on our side. At the same time enabling us to put forth acts of filial obedience, crying, "Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6. Herein he gives us holy communion with himself. The soul knows his voice when he speaks : *Nec hominem sonat* ; there is something too great in it to be the effect of a created power. When the Lord Jesus Christ, at one word, stilled the raging of the sea and wind, all that were with him knew there was Divine power at hand, Matt. viii. 26. And when the Holy Ghost, by one word, stills the storms that are raised in the soul, giving it an immediate calm, it knows his Divine power, and rejoices in his presence.

5. He seals us. "We are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise," Eph. i. 13 : and, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption," ch. iv. 30. I am not very clear in the certain peculiar intentment of this metaphor ; what I am persuaded of the mind of God in it, I shall briefly impart.

In a seal two things are considered, the nature of it, and the use of it. (1.) The nature of sealing consists in the imparting of the image or character of the seal to the thing sealed ; this is to seal a thing, to stamp the character of the seal on it. In this sense, the effectual communication of the image of God unto us should be our sealing. The Spirit in believers really communicating the image of God in righteousness and true holiness unto the soul, sealeth them. To have this stamp of the Holy Ghost, so as to be an evidence to believers that they are accepted with God, is to be sealed by the Spirit ; taking the metaphor from the nature of sealing. And in this sense is our Saviour said to be sealed of God, John vi. 27; even from that impression of the power, wisdom, and majesty of God, that he had upon him in the discharge of his office.

(2.) The end of sealing is two-fold. 1. To confirm any grants or conveyances made in writing ; in such cases men set their seals to make good, and when this is done they are irrevocable. Or to confirm the testimony that is

given by any one of the truth of any thing. Such was the manner among the Jews : When any one had given witness to any thing, and it was received by the judges, they instantly set their seals to it. Hence it is said, " He who receives the testimony of Christ, sets to his seal that God is true," John iii. 33. The promise is the great grant and conveyance of life and salvation in Christ to the souls of believers. That we may have full assurance of the truth of the promise, God gives us his Spirit to satisfy our hearts of it ; and thence is he said to seal us, by assuring our hearts of those promises, and their stability. 2. To appropriate, distinguish, or keep safe, this is the end of sealing ; men set their seals on that which they appropriate, and desire to keep safe for themselves. So evidently in this sense are the servants of God said to be sealed, Rev. vii. 4. That is, marked with God's mark, as his peculiar ones, for this sealing answers to the setting of a mark, Ezek. ix. 4. Then are believers sealed, when they are marked for God to be heirs of the purchased inheritance.

Thus then the Holy Ghost communicates unto us his own likeness, which is also the image of the Father and the Son. " We are changed into this image by the Lord the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 18. And herein he brings us into fellowship with himself. Our likeness to him gives us boldness with him. His work we look for, his fruits we pray for ; and when any effect of grace, any discovery of the image of Christ implanted in us, gives us a persuasion of our being separated and set apart for God, we have communion with him therein.

6. He is an earnest unto us, 2 Cor. i. 22, " He hath given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," chap. v. 5, " Who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit :" as also, Eph. i. 13, 14, " Ye are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." The consideration of what is meant by the Spirit here, and what is meant by an earnest will give some insight into this privilege. (1.) It is the Spirit himself personally

considered, that is said to be this earnest, 2 Cor. i. 22. It is God hath given "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts :" an expression directly answering that of Gal. iv. 6, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts." (2.) An earnest is part of the price of any thing, or part of any grant, given before-hand to assure the person to whom it is given, that at the appointed season he shall receive the whole that is promised him. Thus the Spirit is this earnest ; God gives us the promise of eternal life. To confirm this to us, he giveth us his Spirit, which is as the first part of the promise, to secure us the whole. He is an earnest, given of God, received of us, as the beginning of our inheritance, and the assurance of it. So much as we have of the Spirit, so much we have of heaven in enjoyment, and so much evidence of its future fulness. Under this apprehension of him believers receive him, and rejoice in him : every gracious act of his in their hearts they rejoice in as a drop from heaven, and long for the ocean of it. Not to drive every effect of grace to this issue, is to neglect the work of the Holy Ghost in us, and towards us.

7 The Spirit anoints believers. " We are anointed by the Spirit," 2 Cor. i. 21 : " We have an unction from the Holy One, and we know all things," 1 John ii. 20, and ver. 27. Teaching us the mind and will of God is an eminent part of this unction by him, which only I shall instance in. The Spirit teacheth us of the love of God in Christ ; he makes every gospel truth as wine well refined to our souls ; and the good things of it to be a feast of fat things. He gives us joy and gladness of heart, with all that we know of God, which is the great preservative of the soul, to keep it close to truth. The apostle speaks of our being taught by this unction, as the means whereby we are preserved from seduction. Indeed, to know any truth in the power, sweetness, joy, gladness of it, is that great security of the soul's constancy in the preservation and retaining of it. I must crave the reader's pardon for my briefly passing over these great things of

the gospel. My present design is rather to enumerate than to unfold them. All the privileges we enjoy, all the dignity and honour we are invested with, our whole dedication unto God,—our nobility and royalty, our interest in all church advantages, and approaches to God in worship, our separation from the world,—the name whereby we are called, the liberty we enjoy, all flow from this head; are all branches of this effect of the Holy Ghost.

8. He is also called the “Spirit of supplication;” under which notion he is promised, Zech. xii. 10; and how he effects that in us, is declared, Rom. viii. 26, 27, and Gal. iv. 6; and we are thence said to “pray in the Holy Ghost.” Our prayers may be considered two ways. (1.) As a spiritual duty required of us by God; and so they are wrought in us by the Spirit of sanctification, which helps us to perform all our duties, by exalting all the faculties of the soul for the spiritual discharge of their respective offices in them. (2.) As a means of retaining communion with God, whereby we sweetly ease our hearts in the bosom of the Father, and receive refreshing tastes of his love. The soul is never more raised with the love of God than when by the Spirit taken into intimate communion with him, in the discharge of this duty: and therein it belongs to the Spirit of consolation, to the Spirit promised as a comforter. And this is the next thing to be considered in our communion with the Holy Ghost: namely, what are the peculiar effects which he worketh in us, and towards us. Now these are, his bringing the promises of Christ to remembrance; glorifying him in our hearts, shedding abroad the love of God in us, witnessing with us, as to our spiritual state and condition, sealing us to the day of redemption; being the earnest of our inheritance; anointing us with privileges as to their consolation; and being present with us in our supplications. Here is the wisdom of faith, to find out and meet with the Comforter in all these things: not to lose their sweetness, by lying in the

dark as to their author; nor coming short of the returns which are required of us.

CHAP. III.

The general Consequences in the Hearts of Believers, of these Effects of the Holy Ghost.

Having proceeded thus far in discovering the way of our communion with the Holy Ghost, and insisted on the most noble effects that he produceth, it remains that it be declared, what general consequents of these effects are brought forth in the hearts of believers. Now these, as the former, I shall little more than name; it being not my design to handle the natures of them.

1. Consolation is the first of these. The disciples “walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the consolation of the Holy Ghost,” Acts ix. 31. Whenever there is mention made of consolation in the Scriptures given to the saints, it is the proper consequent of the work of the Holy Ghost. Suffering and consolation are opposed, the latter being a relief against the former; so are all the promises of comfort, and all the expressions of it in the Old and New Testament, still proposed as reliefs against trouble.

Consolation ariseth from the presence or consideration of a greater good, that out-balances the evil or perplexity wherewith we are to contend. Now in the acts of the Holy Ghost, before-mentioned, lie all the springs of our consolation. There is no comfort but from them; and there is no trouble that we may not have comfort in, and against, by them. That a man may have consolation in any condition, nothing is required but the presence of a good, rendering the evil wherewith he is pressed inconsiderable to him. Suppose a man under the greatest calamity that can possibly befall a child of God, let this man have the Holy Ghost, performing the works men-

tioned before toward him, and in despite of all his evil, his consolations will abound. Suppose him to have a sense of the love of God all the while shed abroad in his heart, a clear witness within that he is a child of God, that he is sealed of God for his own, that he is an heir of all the promises of God ; it is impossible that man should not triumph in all his tribulations.

2. Peace ariseth hence also, Rom. xv. 13, "The God of hope fill you with all peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. The power of the Holy Ghost is not only extended to hope, but to our peace also in believing. So is it in the connexion of those promises, John xiv. 26, 27, "I will give you the Comforter :" and what follows that grant ? "Peace," saith he, "I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Nor doth Christ otherwise leave his peace, or give his peace unto them, but by bestowing the Comforter on them. The peace of Christ consists in the soul's sense of its acceptance with God. So is Christ said to be our peace, Eph. ii. 14, by slaying the enmity between God and us, and in taking away the hand-writing that was against us ; Rom. v. 1, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." A comfortable persuasion of our acceptance with God in Christ is the ground of this peace ; it enwraps deliverance from eternal wrath, hatred, curse, condemnation ; all sweetly affecting the soul and conscience.

And this is a branch of the same root with that foregoing ; a consequent of the effects of the Holy Ghost before-mentioned. Suppose a man chosen in the love of the Father, redeemed by the blood of the Son ; yet this person can by no reasonings nor arguings of his own heart, by no considerations of the promises themselves, nor of the love of God, or grace of Christ in them, be brought to any establishment in peace, until it be produced in him, as a fruit of the work of the Holy Ghost in him, and towards him. Peace is the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. The savour of the Spirit, or spiritual mind,

is life and peace, Rom. viii. 6. All we have is from him, and by him.

3. Joy is also of this number. His anointing brings gladness with it, Isai. lxi. 3, "The oil of joy for mourning." The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. To give joy to the hearts of believers, is eminently the work of the Comforter, and this he doth by the particulars before instanced in; that "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God," mentioned Rom. v. 2, which carries the soul through any tribulation, hath its rise in the Spirit's "shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts," ver. 5.

Now there are two ways whereby the Spirit worketh this joy in the hearts of believers. (1.) He doth it immediately by himself, without the interposition of any reasonings, or deductions and conclusions. As in sanctification, he is a well of water springing up in the soul, immediately exerting his efficacy and refreshment; so in consolation, he immediately works the minds of men to a rejoicing and spiritual frame, filling them with exultation and gladness; not that this arises from our reflex consideration of the love of God, but rather gives occasion thereunto. When he so sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, so filling them with gladness by an immediate act and operation, as he caused John the Baptist to leap for joy in the womb, upon the approach of the mother of Jesus. Then doth the soul, even from hence, raise itself to a consideration of the love of God, whence rejoicing doth also flow. Of this joy there is no account to be given, but that the Spirit worketh it when and how he will; he secretly infuses and distils it into the soul, prevailing against all fears and sorrows, filling it with gladness, exultations, and sometimes with unspeakable raptures. (2.) Mediately, by his other works towards us. He gives a sense of the love of God with our acceptance with him; and on the consideration thereof, enables us to receive it. Let what hath been spoken of his operations towards us be considered, what assurance he gives

us of the love of God, what life, power, and security, what pledge of our eternal welfare, and it will be easily perceived, that he lays a sufficient foundation of joy and gladness : not that we are able, upon any rational consideration, deduction, or conclusion, to affect our hearts with this joy and gladness. It is no less the proper work of the Spirit to do it from hence, than to do it immediately.

4. Hope also is an effect of those workings of the Holy Ghost in us, and towards us, Rom. xv. 13.

I should now shew immediately how we hold communion with the Holy Ghost, in the things laid down ; but there are some miscarriages in reference to this dispensation, both in *contempt* of his true work, and pretence of that which is not, that I cannot but remark in my passage.

Take a view then of the state and condition of them, who, professing to believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, do yet despise his Spirit, as to all its operations, gifts, graces and dispensations to his churches and saints. Whilst Christ was in the world with his disciples, he made them no greater promise, neither in respect of their own good, nor of carrying on the work which he had committed to them, than this, of giving them the Holy Ghost. Him he instructeth them to pray for, of the Father, as that which is needful for them as bread for children, Luke xi. 13. Him he promiseth them, as a well of water springing up in them, for their refreshment, strength, and consolation, unto everlasting life, John vii. 37—39. And upon his ascension, this is laid as the ground of that glorious communication of gifts and graces in his plentiful effusion mentioned Eph. iv. 8—12 ; namely, that he had received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, Acts ii. 33, and that in such an eminent manner as thereby to make the greatest and most glorious difference between the administration of the new covenant and old. Especially doth the whole work of the ministry relate to the Holy Ghost. He calls men to that work, and they are separated

unto him, Acts xiii. 2. He furnisheth them with gifts, and abilities for that employment, 1 Cor. xii. 7—10. So that the whole religion we profess, without this administration of the Spirit, is nothing. Nor is there any fruit without it of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

This being the state of things, that in our worship of, and obedience to God, in our own consolation, sanctification, and ministerial employment, the Spirit is the principle, the life, soul, the all of the whole; yet, so desperate hath been the malice of satan, and wickedness of men, that their great endeavour hath been, to shut him quite out of all gospel-administrations.

It is a thing of the most sad consideration, to call to mind, that the name of the Spirit was grown a term of reproach. To plead for, or pretend to pray by the Spirit, was enough to render a man the object of scorn and reproach, from all sorts of men, from the pulpit to the stage. What! you are full of the Spirit, you will pray by the Spirit, you have the gift; come, let us hear your nonsense! And yet, perhaps, these men would think themselves wronged, not to be accounted Christians. Christians! Nay, have not some pretending to be leaders of the flock, yea, claiming a rule and government over their brethren, made it their business to scoff at and reproach the gifts of the Spirit of God? Some bleatings of ill importance are sometimes heard. Is this the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, that believers are called unto? Is this the due entertainment of him whom our Saviour promised to send for the supply of his bodily absence? Is it not enough that men should be contented with such a stupid blindness, as, being called Christians, to look no farther for their comfort and consolation than moral considerations, common to heathens, would lead them; when one infinitely holy and blessed Person of the Trinity hath taken this office upon him to be our Comforter, must they oppose and despise him also? Nothing more discovers how few there are in the world that have an interest in that blessed name whereby we are called. But

this is no place to pursue this discourse. The aim of this discourse is, to evince the folly and madness of men in **general**, who profess to own the gospel of Christ, and yet despise his Spirit, in whomsoever he is manifested. Let us be zealous of the gifts of the Spirit, not envious at them.

From what hath been discoursed, we may also try the spirits that are gone abroad in the world, and which have been exercising themselves at several seasons, ever since the ascension of Christ.

Not long since, his great design was to cry up ordinances without the Spirit, casting all the reproach he could upon him ; now to cry up a Spirit without and against ordinances, casting all reproach and contempt possible upon them. Then he would have a ministry without the Spirit ; now a Spirit without a ministry. Then the reading of the word might suffice, without either preaching or praying by the Spirit ; now the Spirit is enough, without reading or studying the word at all. Let us briefly try them by some of the effects which Christ hath promised to give the Holy Ghost for.

The first general effect, as was observed, was this, that he should bring to remembrance the things that Christ spake for our guidance and consolation. This was to be the work of the Holy Ghost towards the apostles ; this is to be his work to believers to the end of the world. Now the things that Christ spake and did were written that we might believe, "and believing have life through his name," John xx. 30. This then is the work of the Spirit, which Christ hath promised he shall bring to our remembrance, and give us understanding of the words of Christ in the Scripture for our guidance and consolation. Is this now the work of the Spirit, which is abroad in the world, and perverteth many ? Nothing less. His business is to decry the things which Christ hath spoken, which are written in the word ; to pretend new revelations of his own ; to lead men from the written word, wherein the whole work of God, and all the promises of Christ are recorded. It

were a very task to pass through all the eminent effects of the Holy Ghost, in and towards believers ; and to manifest, that the pretending spirit of our days comes in a direct opposition to every one of them. Thus hath satan passed from one extreme to another, from a bitter wretched opposition to the Spirit of Christ, unto a cursed pretending to the Spirit, still to the same end and purpose.

CHAP. IV

Of particular Communion with the Holy Ghost.

THE way being thus made plain for us, I come to shew how we hold particular communion with the Holy Ghost, as he is promised of Christ to be our Comforter, and as working out our consolation. The first thing I shall do, is the proposal of that, which may be some preparation to the duty under consideration ; and this by leading the souls of believers to a due valuation of this work of his, whence he is called our Comforter.

To fit us for the duty intended, let us consider these three things : 1. What it is he comforts us against. 2. Wherewith he comforts us. 3. The principle of all his actings and operations in us for our consolation.

1. There are three things in the whole course of our pilgrimage that the consolations of the Holy Ghost are useful and necessary in. (1.) In our afflictions. Affliction is part of the provision that God hath made in his house for his children, Heb. xii. 5, 6. The great variety of its causes, means, uses, and effects, is generally known. There is a measure of them appointed for every one. To be wholly without them is a temptation, and so in some measure an affliction. In all our afflictions we need the consolations of the Holy Ghost.

There are two great evils, one of which does generally seize on men under their afflictions, and keep them from

a due management of them. The apostle mentioneth them both, Heb. xii. 5, "Despise not the chastisement of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him." One of these extremes men usually fall into ; either they despise the Lord's correction, or sink under it. 1. Men despise it ; they account that which befalls them to be a light or common thing. They take no notice of God in it. They can shift with it well enough. They look on instruments, second causes, provide for their own defence and vindication, with little regard to God. And the ground of this is, they take in succours in their trouble, that God will not mix his grace with. They fix on other remedies than what he hath appointed, and utterly lose all the benefits of their affliction. And so shall every man that relieves himself from any thing but the consolations of the Holy Ghost. 2. Men faint and sink under their trials and afflictions ; which the apostle farther reproves, ver. 12. The first despise the assistance of the Holy Ghost through pride of heart, the latter refuse it through dejection of spirit. And who is there that offends not on one of these hands ?

Now there is no due management of our souls under any affliction, so that God may have the glory of it, and ourselves any spiritual benefit, but by the consolations of the Holy Ghost. All that our Saviour promiseth his disciples, when he tells them of the great trials they were to undergo, is, "I will send you the Spirit," the Comforter, he shall give you peace in me, when in the world you shall have trouble. This is what I aim at ; there is no improvement of any affliction, but merely by the consolations of the Holy Ghost. Is it then of any esteem or value unto you, that you lose not all your trials, temptations, and afflictions, learn to value that whereby alone they are rendered useful.

(2.) Sin is the second burden of our lives, and much the greatest ; unto this is this consolation peculiarly suited. So, Heb. vi. 17, 18, an allusion is taken from the man-slayer under the law, who having killed a man

unawares, and brought the guilt of his blood upon himself, fled with speed for his deliverance to the city of refuge. Our great and only refuge from the guilt of sin is the Lord Jesus Christ, in our flying to him doth the Spirit administer consolation to us. A sense of sin fills the heart with trouble and disquietness ; it is the Holy Ghost which gives us peace in Christ. The former gives an apprehension of wrath, the Holy Ghost sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. From thence doth satan accuse us as objects of God's hatred, " The Spirit bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." There is not any one engine or instrument that sin useth, or sets up against our peace, but one effect or other of the Holy Ghost towards us is fitted to the casting of it down.

(3.) In the whole course of our obedience are his consolations necessary also ; that we may go through it cheerfully, willingly, patiently to the end. In a word, in all the concerns of this life, and in our whole expectation of another, we stand in need of the consolations of the Holy Ghost. Without them, we shall either despise afflictions, or faint under them, and God be neglected, as to his intendments in them. Without them, sin will harden us to a contempt of it, or cast us down to a neglect of the remedies graciously provided against it. Without them, duties will either puff us up with pride, or leave us without that sweetness which is in new obedience. Without them, prosperity will make us carnal, sensual, and utterly weaken us for the trials of adversity. Without them, the comforts of our relations will separate us from God, and the loss of them make our hearts as Nabal's. Without them, the calamity of the church will overwhelm us ; and the prosperity of the church will not concern us. Without them we shall have wisdom for no work, peace in no condition, strength for no duty, success in no trial, joy in no state, no comfort in life, no light in death.

Now our afflictions, our sins, and our obedience, are

the great concerns of our lives; and through all these doth there run a line of consolation from the Holy Ghost. How sad is the condition of poor souls destitute of these consolations? What poor shifts are they forced to betake themselves unto? What giants have they to encounter in their own strength? And whether they are conquered, or seem to conquer, they have nothing but the misery of their trials.

2. The second thing that may teach us to put a due value on the consolations of the Holy Ghost, is the matter of them, or that wherewith he comforts us. Now this may be referred to the two heads formerly treated of: the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son. All the consolations of the Holy Ghost consist in his acquainting us with, and communicating unto us the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son. Nor is there any thing in the one or the other, but he makes it matter of consolation to us; so that indeed we have our communion with the Father in his love, and the Son in his grace, by the operation of the Holy Ghost. (1.) He communicates to us, and acquaints us with the love of the Father. Having informed his disciples of that ground and foundation of their consolation, which, by the Comforter, they should receive; our blessed Saviour, John xvi. 27, shuts up all in this, "The Father himself loveth you:" this is that which the Comforter is given to acquaint us with; even that God is the Father, and that he loves us. And by persuading us of the love of the Father he fills us with consolation. A sense of this is able not only to relieve us, but to make us in every condition rejoice with joy unspeakable. With a sense of his kindness, which is better than life, I rejoice in tribulation, glory in affliction, triumph as a conqueror; though I am killed all the day long, all my sorrows have a bottom that may be fathomed; my trials, bounds that may be compassed: but the breadth, and depth, and height of the love of the Father, who can express? I might render glorious this way of the Spirit's comforting us with the

love of the Father, by comparing it with all other causes and means of joy and consolation whatever. And so discover their emptiness, its fulness, their nothingness, its being all. (2.) Again, he doth it by communicating to us, and acquainting us with the grace of Christ. All the fruits of his purchase, all the desireableness of his person, as we are interested in him. He glorifies Christ, by revealing his excellencies and desirableness to believers. And then he shews them of the things of Christ, his love, the fruits of his death, suffering, resurrection, and intercession ; and with these supports their hearts and souls.

3. The principle and fountain of all his actings, for our consolation, comes next under consideration. Now this is his own great love and infinite condescension. He willingly comes forth from the Father to be our Comforter. He knew what we were, and what we could do, and what would be our dealings with him. He knew we would grieve him, provoke him, quench his motions, defile his dwelling-place ; and yet he would come to be our Comforter. Want of a due consideration of this great love of the Holy Ghost, weakens all the principles of our obedience. Did this dwell and abide upon our hearts, what a dear value must we needs put upon all his operations ? Nothing indeed is valuable, but what comes from love. This is the way the Scripture takes to raise up our hearts to a due estimation of our redemption. "Herein is manifested the love of God, that he laid down his life for us, he loved us, and gave himself for us, he loved us, and washed us with his own blood," 1 John iv. 6, Gal. ii. 20, Rev. i. 7. Hereunto it adds our state and condition, considered when he undertook for us, sinners, enemies, dead, alienated, then he loved us, and died for us, and washed us with his blood. May we not hence also have a value of the dispensation of the Spirit for our consolation ? He proceeds to that end from the Father ; he distributes as he will, works as he pleaseth. And what are we, towards whom he carrieth on this work ? Froward, perverse, unthankful, grieving, vexing,

provoking him. Yet in his love and tenderness, doth he continue to do us good. Let us by faith consider this love of the Holy Ghost. It is the source of all the communion we have with him in this life. This is, as I said, spoken only to prepare our hearts to the communion proposed: and what a little portion is it, of what might be spoken? How might all these considerations be aggravated? What a numberless number might be added? It suffices, that, from what is spoken, it appears, that the work in hand is among the greatest duties, and most excellent privileges of the gospel.

In the description of the returns of our souls to him, I shall, in the first place, propose the general actings of faith, in reference to this work of the Holy Ghost, and then descend to particulars.

Now, there are three general ways of the soul's deportment in this communion. These are, Not to grieve him. Not to quench his motions. Not to resist him.

There are three things to be considered in the Holy Ghost. 1. His person, as dwelling in us. 2. His actings by grace, or his motions. 3. His workings in the ordinances of the Word and sacraments; all for the same end. To these three, are the three cautions before suited. (1.) Not to grieve him, in respect of his person dwelling in us. (2.) Not to quench him, in respect of the actings and motions of his grace. (3.) Not to resist him in respect of the ordinances of Christ. The whole general duty of believers, in their communion with the Holy Ghost, is comprised in these three things.

1. The first caution concerns his person immediately, as dwelling in us. "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God."

The terms of grieving, may be considered either in respect of the persons grieving; or, in respect of the persons grieved. In the latter sense the expression is metaphorical; the Spirit cannot be grieved in a sense which infers alteration, disappointment, weakness. Yet men may do that which is fit to grieve any one, that is kindly affected towards them, as is the Holy Ghost. If

he be not grieved, it is no thanks to us, but to his own unchangeable nature. So that there are two things denoted in this expression :

(1.) That the Holy Ghost is affected towards us, as one that is loving, careful, tender, concerned in our good and well-doing ; and therefore upon our miscarriages is said to be grieved. As a good friend, of a kind and loving nature, is apt to be on the miscarriage of him whom he loves. And this is that we are principally to regard in this caution of it ; the love and tenderness of the Holy Ghost ; grieve him not.

(2.) That we may do these things that are proper to grieve him ; our sin being no less than if he were grieved, as we are. Now how the Spirit is grieved, the apostle declareth in the contexture of that discourse, ver. 21—24. He presseth to a progress in sanctification, and all the fruits of regeneration, ver. 25—29. He dehorts from sundry particular evils, that were contrary thereto, and then gives the general enforcement of the one and the other ; “ Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God ;” that is, by coming short of that universal sanctification, which our being planted into Christ doth require. The positive duty included in this caution, of not grieving the Holy Spirit, is this ; that we pursue universal holiness with regard unto the love, kindness, and tenderness of the Holy Ghost. This is the foundation of our communion in general. When the soul considers the love and tenderness of the Holy Ghost unto him, when he considers all the fruits and acts of his love, and on that account, because he is so concerned in our ways, labours to abstain from evils, and to walk in all the duties of holiness ; this is to have communion with him. This consideration, that the Holy Ghost, who is our Comforter, is delighted with our obedience, grieved at our evils and follies, being made a continual motive to our close walking with God in all holiness, is the first general way of communion with him.

Here let us fix a little. We lose both the power and

pleasure of our obedience, for want of this consideration. We see on what account the Holy Ghost undertakes to be our Comforter, by what ways he performs that office towards us ; what an unworthy thing it is to grieve him, who comes to us on purpose to give us consolation. Let the soul, in the whole course of its obedience, exercise itself by faith to thoughts hereof, and lay due weight upon it. The Holy Ghost, in his infinite love and kindness towards me, hath condescended to be my Comforter ; he doth it willingly, freely, powerfully. What have I received from him ? In the multitude of my perplexities, how hath he refreshed my soul ? Can I live one day without his consolations ? And shall I be regardless of him in that wherein he is concerned ? Shall I grieve him by negligence, sin, and folly ? Shall not love constrain me to walk before him to all well-pleasing ? So have we, in general, fellowship with him.

2. The second is, “ Quench not the Spirit.” It is the Holy Ghost himself that is here intended : but not immediately, in respect of his person, but in respect of his motions, actings, and operations. The Holy Ghost was typified by the fire that was always kept alive on the altar. He is also called a spirit of burning, Isa. iv. 4. Now the opposition that is made to fire in its actings, is by quenching. Hence the opposition made to the actings of the Holy Ghost are called, “ quenching of the Spirit,” as some kind of wet wood will do, when it is cast into the fire. Thence we are said, in pursuance of the same metaphor, *Ἀναζωπυρεω, to stir up with new fire* the gifts that are in us. The Holy Ghost is striving with us, acting in us, moving variously for our growth in grace, and bringing forth fruit meet for the principle he hath endued us with. Take heed, saith the apostle, lest you attend not to his workings, but hinder him in his good-will towards you.

This then is the second general rule for our communion with the Holy Ghost. It respects his gracious operations in us, and by us. There are various ways whereby the

Holy Ghost is said to act, and put forth his power in us ; partly by stirring up the grace we have received : partly, by new supplies of grace from Jesus Christ, falling in with occasions for their exercise, raising good motions immediately, or occasionally within us, all tending to our furtherance in obedience and walking with God. All these are we carefully to observe. Consider the fountain whence they come, and the end they lead us to ; hence have we communion with the Holy Ghost, when we can consider him by faith, as the immediate author of all supplies, assistances, and the whole relief we have by grace, of all good actings, risings, motions in our hearts, of all strivings and contendings against sin. When we consider, I say, all these his actings and workings in their tendencies to our consolation, and on that account are watchful to improve them all to the end aimed at, as coming from him, who is so loving and kind, and tender to us, we have communion with him.

3. The third caution concerns him and his work, in the dispensation of that great ordinance of the Word. Stephen tells the Jews, Acts vii. 51, that they resisted the Holy Ghost ; how did they do it ? Why, as their fathers did it : "as your fathers did, so do ye." How did their fathers resist the Holy Ghost ? Ver. 52, "They persecuted the prophets and slew them ;" their opposition to the prophets in preaching the gospel, was their resisting of the Holy Ghost. Now the Holy Ghost is said to be resisted, in the contempt of the preaching of the Word, because the spiritual gift of preaching is from him. The Holy Ghost setting up a ministry in the church, separating men thereto, furnishing them with gifts for the dispensation of the Word : the not obeying that Word, opposing of it, is called "the resisting the Holy Ghost ;" in the dispensation of the Word, the authority, wisdom, and goodness of the Holy Ghost, in furnishing men with gifts for that end, and his presence with them, is to be eyed. On this reason is obedience to be yielded to the Word, in the ministerial dispensation thereof ; because the Holy

Ghost, and he alone, doth furnish with gifts to that end. When this consideration causeth us to fall low before the Word, then have we communion with the Holy Ghost in that ordinance.

CHAP V

Particular Directions for Communion with the Holy Ghost.

Before I name particular directions for our communion with the Holy Ghost, I must premise some cautions :

First, the Divine nature is the reason and cause of all worship ; so that it is impossible to worship any one person, and not worship the whole Trinity. Secondly, when we begin our prayers to God the Father, and end them in the name of Jesus Christ ; yet the Son is no less worshipped in the beginning than the Father, though he be peculiarly mentioned as Mediator in the close. Thirdly, in that heavenly directory which we have, Ephes. ii. 18, this whole business is declared : our access in our worship is said to be to the Father ; and this through Christ, or his mediation, by the Spirit. Here is a distinction of the persons, as to their operations ; but not at all as to their being the object of our worship. For the Son and the Holy Ghost are no less worshipped in our access to God, than the Father himself. Only the grace of the Father, which we obtain by the mediation of the Son, and the assistance of the Spirit, is that which we draw nigh to God for. So that when by the distinct dispensation of the Trinity, and every person we are led to worship ; that is, to act faith on, or invoke any person, we do herein worship the whole Trinity, and every person, by what name soever, of Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, we invoke him. So that this is to be observed in this whole matter ; that if any work of the Holy Ghost, or any other

person, which is appropriated to him, draws us to the worship of him ; yet he is not worshipped exclusively, but the whole Godhead is worshipped.

These cautions being premised, I say, that we are distinctly to worship the Holy Ghost. As is the case of faith, in respect of the Father and the Son, John xiv. 1, “ Believe in God, believe also in me.” This extends itself no less to the Holy Ghost. Christ called the disciples to the acting of faith on him, he being upon the accomplishment of the great work of his mediation. And the Holy Ghost now carrying on the work of his delegation requireth the same. And to the same purpose are their distinct operations mentioned. “ My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” Now, as the reason of the worship of the Son is not his mediation, but his being God, his mediation being a powerful motive thereto ; so the reason of our worshipping the Holy Ghost, is not his being our Comforter, but his being God ; yet his being our Comforter is a powerful motive thereunto.

This is the sum of the first direction. The grace, love, effects of the Holy Ghost, as he is our Comforter, ought to stir us up to love, worship, believe, and invoke him. Though all this being directed to him as God, is no less directed to the other persons, than to him ; only by the fruits of his love towards us, are we stirred up unto it.

These things being pre-supposed, let the saints learn to act faith distinctly on the Holy Ghost, as the immediate efficient cause of all the good things mentioned. Faith, I say, to believe in him ; and faith in all things to believe him, and to yield obedience to him. Faith, not not imagination. The distinction of the Persons in the Trinity, is not to be fancied, but believed. So, then, the Scripture so fully, frequently, clearly ascribing the things we have been speaking of, to the immediate efficiency of the Holy Ghost, faith closeth with him, in the truth revealed, and peculiarly regards him, worships him, serves him, waits for him, prayeth to him, praiseth him ; all these things the saints do in faith ; the person of the

Holy Ghost, revealing itself in these operations and effects, is the peculiar object of our worship. But this must be a little farther branched into particulars.

1. Let us then lay weight on every effect of the Holy Ghost, in any of the particulars before mentioned, on this account, that they are acts of his love and power towards us. This faith will do, that takes notice of his kindness in all things. Frequently he performs, in sundry particulars, the office of a Comforter towards us, and we are not thoroughly comforted; we take no notice at all of what he doth; then is he grieved. Of those who receive, and own the consolation he administers; how few are there that consider him as the Comforter, and rejoice in him as they ought? Upon every work of consolation that the believer receives, this ought his faith to resolve upon. This is from the Holy Ghost, he is the Comforter, the God of all consolation. I know there is no joy, peace, hope, nor comfort but what he works and bestows; and that he might give me this consolation, he hath willingly condescended to this office of a Comforter; his love was in it, and on that account doth he continue it. Also he is sent by the Father and Son for that purpose. By this means come I to be partaker of my joy; it is in the Holy Ghost; of consolation, he is the Comforter. What price now shall I set upon his love? How shall I value the mercy that I have received?

This is applicable to every particular effect of the Holy Ghost towards us, and herein have we communion with him. Doth he shed abroad the love of God in our hearts? Doth he witness unto our adoption? The soul considers his presence, ponders his love, his condescension and kindness, is filled with reverence of him, and care not to grieve him, and labours to preserve his temple, his habitation, pure and holy.

2. Again, our communion with him causeth us to return praise, and thanks, and honour, and glory, and blessing to him, on the account of the mercies and privileges which we receive from him. Herein consists our next

direction. So do we with the Son of God on the account of our redemption : “ To him that loved us, and washed us with his own blood, to him be praise and glory,” Rev. i. 6, 13, 14. And are not the like praises and blessings due to him, by whom the work of redemption is made effectual to us ? Who with no less infinite love undertook our consolation than the Son our redemption ? When we feel our hearts warmed with joy, supported in peace, established in obedience, let us ascribe to him the praise that is due to him ; bless his name, and rejoice in him.

And this glorifying of the Holy Ghost in thanksgivings, on a sense of his consolations, is no small part of our communion with him. Considering his free engagement in this work, his coming forth from the Father to this purpose, his mission by the Son, and condescension therein, his love and kindness, the soul of a believer is poured out in thankful praises to him, and is sweetly affected with the duty. There is no duty that leaves a more heavenly savour in the soul than this doth. Also,

3. In our prayers to him, for the carrying on the work of our consolation, which he hath undertaken, lies our communion with him. John prays for grace and peace from the “ seven spirits that are before the throne,” or the Holy Ghost, whose operations are perfect and complete. This part of his worship is expressly mentioned frequently in Scripture, and all others necessarily attend it. Let the saints consider what need they stand in of these effects of the Holy Ghost. Weigh all the privileges which we are made partakers of. Remember that he distributes them as he will, that he hath the sovereign disposal of them. In this duty is put forth no small part of the life, efficacy, and vigour of faith ; and we come short of that enlargedness of spirit in dealing with God, and are straitened from walking in the breadth of his ways, if we learn not ourselves to meet him with his worship in every way he is pleased to communicate himself unto us. In these things he does so in the person of

the Holy Ghost ; in that Person do we meet him, his love, grace, and authority, by our prayers and supplications. Again,

4. Consider him as he condescends to this delegation of the Father and the Son, to be our Comforter, and ask him daily of the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. This is the daily work of believers. They by faith consider the Holy Ghost as promised to be sent : in this promise, they know, lies all their grace, peace, mercy, joy, and hope. For by him alone are these things communicated to them. If therefore our life to God, or the joy of that life be considerable, in this we are to abound : to ask him of the Father, as children do of their parents, daily bread. And in this asking and receiving of the Holy Ghost, we have communion with the Father in his love, whence he is sent, and with the Son in his grace, whereby he is obtained for us, so with himself, on the account of his voluntary condescension to this dispensation. Every request for the Holy Ghost, implies our closing with all these ;—“ Oh, the riches of the grace of God !”

5. Humbling ourselves for our miscarriages, in reference to him, is another part of our communion with him. That we have grieved him as to his person, quenched him as to the motion of his grace, or resisted him in his ordinances, is to be mourned for. Let our souls be humbled before him on this account. This one ingredient of godly sorrow, and the thoughts of it are as suitable to the affecting our hearts with humiliation and indignation against sin, as any other whatever.

I shall shut up this whole discourse with some considerations of the sad estate of men not interested in this promise of the Spirit, nor made partakers of his consolation.

1. They have no true consolation, be their condition what it will. Are they under affliction ? They must bear their own burden ; and how much too weak they are for it, if God be pleased to lay on his hand with more weight

than ordinary, is easily known. Men may have stoutness of spirit, and put on great resolutions to wrestle with their troubles. But when this is merely from the natural spirit of a man, it is, (1.) For the most part with respect to others, that they may not appear low-spirited, or dejected. Their hearts are eaten up and devoured with troubles and anxiety of mind. Their thoughts are perplexed, and they are still striving, but never come to a conquest. Every new trouble, every little alteration in their trials, puts them to new vexation. It is an ungrounded resolution that bears them up, and they are easily shaken. (2.) What is the best of their resolves and enduring ? It is but a contending with God, who hath entangled them ; the struggling of a flea under a mountain. Yea, though on outward considerations they endeavour after patience ; yet all is but a contending with God, a striving to be quiet under that which God hath sent on purpose to disturb them ; God doth not afflict evil men, to exercise their patience ; but to disturb their peace and security. All their arming themselves with patience and resolution, is but to keep the hold, that God will cast them out of ; or else make them nearer to ruin. This is the best of their consolation in the time of their trouble.

And is it any better with them in their prosperity ? This indeed is often great, and is marvellously described in Scripture, as to their lives, and oftentimes quiet, peaceable ends. But have they any true consolation all their days ? They eat, drink, sleep, and make merry, and heap up to themselves : but how little do these things make them differ from the beasts that perish ? Solomon's advantage to have the use, and know the utmost of these things, much beyond any of the sons of men of our generation, is commonly taken notice of. The account also that he gives of them is known : "They are all vanity and vexation of spirit." This is their consolation ; a crackling of thorns under the pot, a sudden flash and blaze that begins but to perish. So that both adversity and

prosperity slayeth them, and whether they are laughing or crying, they are still dying.

2. They have no peace ; no peace with God, nor in their own souls. I know that many of them upon false grounds and expectations, make a shift to keep things in some quietness. But true and solid peace, being an effect of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of believers, they who are not made partakers of him, have no peace. They may cry Peace, Peace, indeed, when sudden destruction is at hand. The principles of their peace are darkness or ignorance, treachery of conscience, self-righteousness, and vain hope. To these heads may all the principles of their peace be reduced, and what will these avail them in the day when the Lord shall deal with them ?

3. I might say the same concerning their joy and hope ; they are false and perishing. Let them consider this, who have satisfied themselves with a persuasion of their interest in the good things of the gospel, and yet have despised the Spirit of Christ. I know there are many that may pretend to him, and yet are strangers to his grace : but if they perish, who in profession use him kindly, where shall they appear, who oppose and affront him ? The Scripture tells us, that unless the Spirit of Christ be in us, we are dead, we are reprobates, we are none of Christ's ; without him, you can have none of these glorious effects of his towards believers ; and you are so far from inquiring whether he be in you or not, that you are ready to deride them in whom he is. Are there none who profess the gospel, who have never once seriously inquired, whether they are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, or not ? You that almost account it a ridiculous thing to be put upon any such question ; who look on all men as vain pretenders, that talk of the Spirit ; the Lord awake such men to a sight of their condition, before it be too late. If the Spirit dwell not in you, if he be not your Comforter, neither is God your Father, nor the Son your Advocate, nor have you any portion in the gospel.

Oh ! that God would awake some poor soul to the consideration of this thing ; before the neglect and contempt of the Holy Ghost come to that despising of him, from which there is no recovery. That the Lord would spread before them all the folly of their hearts, that they may be ashamed and confounded, and act no more presumptuously !

EXTRACTS
FROM
T H E W O R K S
OF
MR. JOHN SMITH,
Some time Fellow of Queen's College in Cambridge.
WITH
A Sermon preached at his Funeral,
IN AUGUST, 1652.

TO

THE READER.

THE author of these discourses was one whom I knew for many years, not only when he was Fellow of Queen's College, but when a student in Emmanuel College, where his early piety and the remembering his Creator in those days of his youth, as also his excellent improvements in the choicest parts of learning, endeared him to many, particularly to his careful tutor, then Fellow of Emmanuel College, afterwards Provost of King's College, Dr. Whichcote ; to whom for his directions and encouragements of him in his studies, his seasonable provision for his support when he was a young scholar, as also upon other considerations, our author did ever express a great and singular regard.

But besides I considered him, (which was more) as a true servant and friend of God : and to such a one, and what relates to such, I thought that I owed no less care and diligence. The former title (a servant of God) is very often in Scripture given to that incomparable person, Moses : incomparable for his philosophical accomplishments and knowledge of nature, as also for his political wisdom, and great abilities in the conduct of affairs ; and in speaking excellent sense, strong and clear reason in any case that was before him ; for “ he was mighty in

words and deeds," Acts vii. (and of both these kinds of knowledge wherein Moses excelled, as also in the more mysterious knowledge of the Egyptians, there are several instances and proofs in the Pentateuch :) incomparable as well for the loveliness of his disposition, the inward ornament and beauty of a meek and humble spirit, as for the extraordinary amiableness of his outward person ; and incomparable for his unexampled self-denial in the midst of the greatest allurements of this world. And from all these great accomplishments in Moses, it appears how excellently he was qualified and enabled to answer that title, "The servant of God," more frequently given to him in Scripture than unto any other.

The other title (a friend of God) is given to Abraham, the father of the faithful, an eminent exemplar of self-resignation and obedience even in trials of the greatest difficulty. And it is given to him thrice in Scripture, 2 Chron. xx. 7, Isa. xli. 8, James ii. 23, and plainly implied in Gen. xviii. 17, "Shall I hide from Abraham," &c. but expressed in the Jerusalem Targum there, רְחוּמִי, and in Philo Jud. τῷ φίλῳ με. Nor is less insinuated concerning Moses, with whom God is said to have spoken, פֶּה אֶל פֶּה, *mouth to mouth*, and פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים, *face to face*, as a man speaketh unto his friend.

And how properly both these titles were verified concerning our author, who was a faithful, hearty, and industrious servant of God, counting it his duty and dignity, his meat and drink, to do the will of his Master in heaven, and that *εκ ψυχης* and *μετ' ευνοιας*, *from his very soul*, and *with good-will*, (the characters of a good servant,) and who was dearly affected towards God, and treated by God as a friend ; may appear from that account of him in the sermon at his funeral. I might easily fill much paper, if I should particularly recount those many excellencies that shined forth in him : but I would study to be short. I might truly say, that he was both a righteous and a truly honest man, and also a good man. He was a follower and imitator of God in purity and holiness,

in benignity, goodness, and love, a love enlarged as God's love is, whose goodness overflows to all, and his "tender mercies are over all his works." He was a lover of our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, a lover of his Spirit and of his life, a lover of his excellent laws and rules of holy living, a serious practiser of his sermon on the mount, that best sermon that ever was preached, and yet none more generally neglected by those that call themselves Christians; though the observance of it be for the true interest both of men's souls and of Christian states and commonwealths; and accordingly, (as being the surest way to their true establishment,) it is compared to the "building upon a rock," Matt. vii. 24. To be short, he was a Christian; not almost, but altogether; a Christian inwardly, and in good earnest: religious he was, but without any ostentation; not so much a talking or a disputing, as a living, a doing, and an obeying Christian; one inwardly acquainted with the simplicity and power of godliness, but no admirer of the pharisaic forms, (though never so goodly and specious,) which do no affect the adult and strong Christians, though they may and do those that are unskilful and weak. For in this weak and low state of the divided churches in Christendom, weak and slight things (especially if they make a fair shew in the flesh, as the apostle speaks) are most esteemed; whereas in the mean time the weightier matters of the law, the most substantial parts of religion are passed over and disregarded by them, as being grievous to them, and no way for their turns, no way for their corrupt interests, worldly ease, and worldly advantages. But God's thoughts are not as their thoughts: "The circumcision which is of the heart, and in the spirit," is that "whose praise is of God," though not of men; and "that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is an abomination in the sight of God."

What I shall further observe concerning the author, is only this, that he was eminent as well in those perfections which have most of Divine worth and excellency in them,

and rendered him a truly God-like man, as in those other accomplishments of the mind, which rendered him a very rational and learned man : and withal, in the midst of all these great accomplishments, as eminent and exemplary in unaffected humility. And herein he was like Moses, that servant and friend of God, who was most “ meek and lowly in heart,” (as our Lord is also said to have been, be, Matt. xi. in this, as in all other respects, greater than Moses,) “ above all the men which were upon the face of the earth,” Num. xii. 3. And thus he excelled others as much in humility as he did in knowledge, in that thing which, though in a lesser degree in others, is apt to swell them with pride and self-conceit. But Moses was humble, though he was a person of brave parts ; and, having had the advantages of a most ingenuous education, was admirably accomplished in the choicest parts of knowledge, and “ learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians ;” whereby some of the ancients understood the mysterious hieroglyphical learning, natural philosophy, music, physic, and mathematics. And for this last, (to omit the rest) how excellent this humble man, the author, was therein, did appear to those who had the pleasure of hearing him read the mathematical lectures in the schools for some years. To conclude, he was a plain-hearted both friend and Christian, one in whose spirit and mouth there was no guile ; a profitable companion ; nothing of vanity and triflingness in him, as there was nothing of sourness and stoicism. I can very well remember, when I have had private converse with him, how pertinently and freely he would speak to any matter proposed, how weighty, substantial, and clearly expressive of his sense his private discourses would be, and both for matter and language much of the same importance and value with such exercises as he studied for, and performed in publick.

I have intimated some things concerning the author ; much more might be added, but it needs not, there being already drawn a fair and lively character of him by a worthy friend, in the sermon preached at his funeral ;

wherein, if some part of the character should seem to have in it any thing of hyperbolism and strangeness, it must seem so to such only who either were unacquainted with him, and strangers to his worth, or else find it an hard thing not to be envious, and a difficulty to be humble. But those that had a more inward converse with him, knew him to be one of those “of whom the world was not worthy,” one of “the excellent ones in the earth;” a person truly exemplary in the temper and constitution of his spirit, and in the well-ordered course of his life; a life “*unius quasi coloris, sine actionum dissensione,*” (as I remember Seneca expresses it somewhere in his epistles,) “all of one colour, every where like itself;” and eminent in those things that are worthy of praise and imitation. And certainly a just representation of those excellencies that shined in him, (as also a faithful celebration of the like accomplishments in others,) is doing honour to God, who is wonderful in his saints; and it may be also of great use to others, particularly for the awakening and obliging them to an earnest endeavouring after those heights and eminent degrees in grace and virtue, which by such examples they see to be attainable, through the assistances which the Divine goodness is ready to afford those souls which “press towards the mark, and reach forth to those things that are before.” The lives and examples of men eminently holy and useful in their generation, are ever to be valued by us as great blessings from heaven, and to be considered as excellent helps to the advancement of religion in the world: and therefore there being before us these *εικόνες εμψυχοί*, (as St. Basil speaks,) *αγαλματα κινημενα και εμπρεστα*, “living pictures, moving and active statues,” fair ideas and lively patterns of what is most lovely and excellent; it should be our serious care that we be not, through an unworthy and lazy self-neglect, “Ingentium exemplorum parvi imitatores,” to use Salvian’s expression; it should be our holy ambition to transcribe their virtues and excellencies, to make their noblest and best accomplishments our own,

by a constant endeavour after the greatest resemblance of them, and by being “followers of them as they were also of Christ,” who is the fair and bright exemplar of all purity and holiness, the highest and most absolute pattern of whatsoever is lovely and excellent, and makes most for the accomplishing and perfecting of human nature.

Having observed these things concerning the author of these discourses, I proceed now to observe something concerning the several discourses in this volume. And indeed some of these observations I ought not in justice to the author to omit: and all of them may be for the benefit of at least some readers.

The first discourse, concerning “The true Method of attaining Divine Knowledge, and an Increase therein,” was intended by the author as a necessary introduction to the ensuing treatises, and therefore is the shorter; yet it contains excellent sense, and solid matter, well beaten and compacted, and lying close together in a little room, many very seasonable observations for this age, wherein there is so much of fruitless notion, so little of the true Christian life and practice.

Shorter yet are the two next tracts of Superstition and Atheism, which were also intended by the author to prepare the way for some of the following discourses.

Yet as for the tract of superstition, some things that are briefly intimated by the author therein, may receive a further explication from his other discourses, more especially from the eighth, viz. “Of the Shortness and Vanity of a Pharisaic Righteousness; or, an Account of the false Grounds upon which men are apt vainly to conceit themselves to be religious.” And indeed what the author writes concerning “that more refined, that more close and subtle superstition,” he would frequently speak of, and that with authority and power. For being possessed of the inward life and power of true holiness, he had a very strong and clear sense of what he spake, and therefore a great and just indignation (as against open and gross irreligion, so also) against that vain-glorious, slight,

and empty sanctity of the spiritual pharisees, who would (as our Saviour speaks of the old pharisees, Mark vii.) "make void" the commandments of God, the weightier things of religion, the indispensable concerns of Christianity; while, instead of an inward living righteousness and an entire obedience, they would substitute some external observances, and a mere outward, lifeless, and slight righteousness; and in the room of "the new creature," made "after God," set up some creature of their own, made after their own image, a self-framed righteousness, not worthy to be named with those instances of "the power of godliness," hearty and universal obedience, entire self-resignation, a being crucified to the world, plucking out of the right eye, and cutting off of the right hand; mortification of the more dear and beloved sins, and the closer tendencies and inclinations to sin and vanity.

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked:" God will not be put off with empty pretence and pharisaic appearances, (how glorious and precious soever in the eyes of men.) God will not be flattered with goodly praises, nor satisfied with words and notions, when the life and practice is a real contradiction to them. God will not be satisfied with a specious "form of godliness," when men under this form are "lovers of themselves, covetous, proud, high-minded, fierce, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," and are manifestly under the power of these and the like spiritual (if not also fleshly,) wickednesses. For the power of sin within can (it seems) easily agree and consist with "the form of godliness without." But two such contrary powers as the power of godliness and the power of sin, two such contrary kingdoms as the kingdom of the Spirit and the kingdom of the flesh, which is made up of many petty and lesser principalities of various lusts and pleasures, warring sometimes amongst themselves, but always confederate in warring against the soul; these cannot stand together, nor be established in one soul.

If what the author, out of great charity to the souls of men, has observed concerning these things were seriously considered, Christianity would then recover its reputation, and appear in its own primitive lustre and native loveliness ; such as shined forth in the lives of those first and best Christians, who were Christians in good earnest, and were distinguished from all other men in excelling and outshining them in whatever things were “true, venerable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.” Then would the true power of godliness manifest itself ; which signifies infinitely more than a power to dispute with heat and vehemency about some opinions, or to discourse volubly about some matters in religion, and in such forms of words as are taking with the weak and unskilful : more than a power to pray without a form of words ; (for this may be done by the formal and unspiritual Christian:) more than a power to deny themselves in some things that are easy to be parted with, and do not much cross their inclinations, their self-will, nor prejudice their dear and most beloved lusts and pleasures, their profitable and advantageous sins : and more than a power to observe some lesser and easier commands, or to perform an outward obedience, void of inward life and love, and a complacency in the law of God, (of which temper our author discourses at large.)

But I must not forget that there remains something to be observed concerning some other treatises. And having been so large in the last observation, I shall be shorter in the rest. And now to proceed to the next, which is of atheism. This discourse (being but preparatory to the ensuing tracts, is short ; yet I would remind the reader, that what is more briefly handled here, may be supplied out of the fifth discourse, viz. “Of the Existence and Nature of God,” of which (if the former part seem more speculative, yet) the latter containing several “Deductions and Inferences from the Consideration of the Divine Nature and Attributes,” is less obscure and more practical, as it clearly directs us to the best (though not much

observed,) way of glorifying God, and being made happy and blessed by a participation and resemblance of him ; and as it plainly directs a man to such apprehensions of God as are apt and powerful to beget in him the noblest and dearest love to God, the sweetest delight, and the most peaceful confidence in him.

I pass on to the Discourse on Prophecy. This elaborate treatise is of a more speculative nature than any of the rest ; yet it is also useful, and contains sundry observations not only of light and knowledge, but also of use and practice. For besides that in this treatise several passages of Scripture are illustrated out of Jewish monuments, there are two chapters, (to name no more,) viz. i. and iv. (the longest in this treatise,) which more particularly relate to practice, and might be (if well considered,) available to the bettering of some men's manners.

The discourse of the legal and the evangelical Righteousness is as much practical as the former was speculative. Nor was the composure of that treatise more painful to the author than the elaborating of this, at least the former half of this, wherein the author has traversed *loca nullius ante trita solo*, the more unknown records and monuments of Jewish authors, for the better stating the Jewish notion of the righteousness of the law ; the clearing of which in chap. ii. and v. as also the settling the difference between that "righteousness which is of the law," and that "which is of faith," between "the old and the new covenant," and the account of the nature of justification and Divine acceptance, are all of them of no small use and consequence.

Of the eighth discourse, shewing the Vanity of a Pharisaic Righteousness, I have spoken before.

The next, largely treating of the "Excellency and Nobleness of true Religion and Holiness," shews the author's mind to have been not slightly tinctured and washed over with religion, but rather to have been double-dyed, thoroughly embued and coloured with that *generosum honestum*, as the satyrist styles it, *incoctum generoso*

pectus honesto. But the author's life and actions spake no less; and indeed there is no language so fully expressive of a man as the language of his deeds. Those that were thoroughly acquainted with him, knew well that there was in him (as was said of Solomon,) a largeness and vastness of heart and understanding, so there was also in him "a free, ingenuous, noble spirit," most abhorrent of what was sordid and unworthy; and this is the genuine product of religion in that soul where it is suffered to rule, and (as St. James speaks of patience,) "to have its perfect work." The style in this tract may seem more sublime than in the other, (which might be perhaps from the nature of the subject, apt to heighten expressions;) but yet in this (as in the other tracts,) it is free from the vanity of affectation, which a mind truly ennobled by religion cannot stoop to.

But if in this tract the style seem more magnificent, yet in the last discourse, (viz. "Of a Christian's Conflicts and Conquests,") it is most familiar. The matter of it is very useful and practical. For as it more fully and clearly acquaints a Christian with the danger and unseen methods of satan's activity, (concerning which the notions of many men are discovered here to be very short and imperfect,) so it also acquaints him with such principles as are available to beget in him the greatest courage and resolution against the day of battle, chasing away all lazy faint-heartedness and despair of victory.

The other discourses were delivered (being college-exercises,) in a way suitable to that auditory. And therefore it may not be thought strange, if sometimes they seem, for matter and style, more remote from vulgar capacities. Yet even in these discourses, what is most practical is easily intelligible by every honest-hearted Christian.

It is possible that some passages in these tracts, which seem dubious, may, upon a patient considering them, if the reader be unprejudiced, and of a clear mind and heart, gain his assent; and what, upon the first reading

seems obscure and less grateful, may upon another view, and further thoughts, clear up and be thought worthy of all acceptation. It is not with the fair representations and pictures of the mind as with other pictures ; these of the mind shew best the nearer they are viewed, and the longer the intellectual eye dwells upon them.

There is only one thing more which I ought "not to forget, That the now-published tracts are posthumous works ; that it is likely, if the author himself had revised them in his life-time, with an intent to present them to public view, they would have received from his happy hand some further polishing and enlargements. But it pleased the only wise God (in whose hand our breath is,) to call for him home "to the spirits of just men made perfect," after he had lent him to this unworthy world for about five and thirty years. A short life, if we measure it by so many years ; but if we consider the great ends of life, which he fulfilled in his generation, it was not to be accounted short, but long ; and we may justly say of him, what is said by the author of the Book of Wisdom concerning Enoch, that great exemplar of holiness, and the shortest-lived of the patriarchs before the flood, (for he lived but 365 years, as many years as there are days in one year,) "He being consummated in a short time, fulfilled a long time." For (as the same author doth well express it in some preceding verses,) "Honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that which is measured by number of years ; but wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age."

And now that this volume is finished, through the assistance of God, the Father of lights, and the Father of mercies, (whose rich goodness and grace in enabling me both "to will and to do," and "to continue patiently in so doing," I desire humbly to acknowledge;) now that the several papers are brought together in this collection to their due and proper places, (as it was said of the bones scattered in the valley, that "they came together, bone to his bone," Ezek. xxxvii.) what remains, but that

“the Lord of life, who giveth to all things life and breath,” be, with all earnestness, implored, that he would please to put breath into these (otherwise dry,) bones, that they “may live:” that, besides this paper-life, (which is all that man can give to these writings,) they may have a vital energy within us; that the practical truths contained in these discourses may not be unto us a “dead letter,” but “Spirit and life;” that “He who teacheth us to profit,” would prosper these papers for the attainment of all those good ends to which they are designed; that it would please the God of all grace to remove all darkness and prejudice from the mind of any reader, and whatsoever would hinder the fair reception of truth; that the reader may have an inward, practical, and feeling knowledge of the “doctrine which is according to godliness,” and live a life worthy of that knowledge; is the prayer of

His servant in Christ Jesus,
JOHN WORTHINGTON.

Cambridge, Dec. 22, 1659.

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE TRUE METHOD

OF ATTAINING

DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

PSALM iii. 10.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments.

JOHN vii. 17.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. —

THE
TRUE METHOD
OF ATTAINING
DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.*

SECT. I.

That Divine things are to be understood rather by a spiritual sensation than a verbal description. Sin and wickedness prejudicial to true knowledge. That purity of heart and life, as also an ingenuous freedom of judgment, are the best preparations for the entertainment of truth.

IT hath been long since observed, that every art and science hath some certain principles upon which the whole must depend ; and he that would fully acquaint himself with the mysteries thereof, must come furnished with some knowledge of them. Were I indeed to define *Divinity*, I should rather call it *a Divine life*, than *a Divine science* ; it being something rather to be understood by a spiritual sensation, than by any verbal descrip-

* I am sensible, some parts of the following discourses are scarce intelligible to unlearned readers. But I could not prevail with myself on that account, to rob those who can understand them, of so great a treasure.

March 10, 1752.

JOHN WESLEY.

tion, as all things of sense and life are best known by sentient and vital faculties ; every thing is best known by that which bears a just resemblance and analogy with it : and therefore the Scripture is wont to set forth a good life as the fundamental principle of Divine science ; “ Wisdom hath built her an house, and hewn out her seven pillars :” but “ the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” the foundation of the whole fabric.

We shall, therefore, as a preface to what we shall discourse upon the heads of divinity, speak something of this true method of knowing, which is not so much by notions as actions ; as religion itself consists not so much in words as things. They are not always the best skilled in divinity, that are the most studied in art and science. He that is most practical in Divine things, hath the purest and sincerest knowledge of them. Divinity indeed is a true efflux from the eternal light, which, like the sun-beams, does not only enlighten, but warm and enliven ; and therefore our Saviour hath in his beatitudes connected purity of heart with the beatifical vision. And as the eye cannot behold the sun, unless it be sun-like, and hath the form and resemblance of the sun drawn in it ; so neither can the soul of man behold God, unless it be God-like, hath God formed in it, and be made partaker of the Divine nature. The apostle Paul, when he would lay open the right way of attaining Divine truth, saith, “ Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth.” The knowledge of Divinity that appears in systems and models, is but a poor wan light, but the powerful energy of Divine knowledge displays itself in purified souls. Here we shall find the true *πεδίον αληθείας*, as the ancient philosophy speaks, *the land of truth*.

To seek our divinity merely in books and writings, is “ to seek the living among the dead :” we do but in vain seek God many times in these where his truth too often is not so much enshrined as entombed. No, seek for God within thine own soul. He is best discerned by an intellectual touch of him. We must “ see with our eyes, and hear

with our ears, and our hands must handle the Word of life.” The soul itself hath its sense, as well as the body; and therefore David, when he would teach us how to know what the Divine goodness is, calls not for speculation but sensation, “Taste and see how good the Lord is.” That is not the best and truest knowledge of God which is wrought out by the labour and sweat of the brain, but that which is kindled within us by an heavenly warmth in our hearts. As in the natural body it is the heat that sends up good blood and warm spirits into the head, whereby it is best enabled to its several functions; so that which enables us to know and understand aright the things of God, must be a living principle of holiness within us. When *the tree of knowledge* is not planted by *the tree of life*, and sucks not up sap from thence, it may be as well fruitful with *evil* as with *good*, and bring forth *bitter* fruit as well as *sweet*. If we would indeed have our knowledge thrive and flourish, we must water the tender plants of it with holiness. When Zoroaster’s scholars asked him what they should do to get winged souls, such as might soar aloft in the bright beams of Divine truth, he bids them bathe themselves “in the waters of life.” They asking what they were, he tells them, the “four cardinal virtues,” which are “the four rivers of Paradise.” It is but a thin, airy knowledge that is got by mere speculation, which is ushered in by syllogisms and demonstrations; but that which springs forth from true goodness, as Origen speaks, brings such a Divine light into the soul, as is more clear and convincing than any demonstration. The reason why, notwithstanding all our acute reasons and subtle disputes, truth prevails no more in the world, is, we so often disjoin truth and goodness, which in themselves can never be disunited; they grow both from the same root, and live in one another. We may, as in Plato’s deep pit, with faces bended downwards, converse with sounds and shadows; but not with the life and substance of truth, while our souls remain defiled with any vice or lusts.

These are the black Lethe lake which drench the souls of men : he that wants true virtue in heaven's logic, " is blind, and cannot see afar off." Those filthy mists that arise from impure minds, like an atmosphere, perpetually encompass them, that they cannot see that sun of Divine truth that shines about them, but never shines into any unpurged souls ; the darkness comprehends it not, the foolish man understands it not. All the light and knowledge that may seem to rise in unhallowed minds, is but like those flames that arise from our culinary fires, that are soon quenched in their own smoke ; or like those foolish fires that do but flit to and fro upon the surface of this earth where they were first brought forth ; and serve not so much to enlighten as to defile us ; nor to direct the wandering traveller into his way, but to lead him farther out of it. While we lodge any vice in us, this will be perpetually twisting itself into the thread of our finest-spun speculations ; it will be continually climbing up into the bed of reason ; like the wanton ivy twisting itself about the oak, it will twine about our judgments and understandings, till it hath sucked out the life and spirit of them. I cannot think such black oblivion would possess the minds of some as to make them question that truth which to good men shines as bright as the sun at noon-day, had they not foully defiled their own souls with some hellish vice or other, how fairly soever they may dissemble it. There is a benumbing spirit, a congealing vapour that ariseth from sin and vice, that will stupify the senses of the soul. This is the deadly nightshade, that derives its cold poison into the understandings of men.

Such as men themselves are, such will God himself seem to be. It is the maxim of most wicked men, that the Deity is some way or other like themselves. Their souls do more than whisper it, though their lips speak it not ; and though their tongues be silent, yet their lives cry it upon the house-tops. That idea which men generally have of God is nothing else but the picture of their own complexion : that notion of him which hath the

supremacy in their minds, is only such as hath been shaped out according to some pattern of themselves ; though they may so cloak and disguise this idol of their own, when they expose it to the view of the world, that it may seem very beautiful, and indeed any thing else rather than what it is. Most men (though it may be they themselves take no great notice of it) like that disseminating monk, are of a different judgment in the schools from what they are in their closets. There is a double head, as well as a double heart. Men's corrupt hearts will not suffer their conceptions of Divine things to be cast into that form that an higher reason, which may sometime work within them, would put them into. At best, while any inward lust is harboured in the minds of men, it will so weaken them, that they can never bring forth any masculine or generous knowledge. Sin and lust are always of an hungry nature, and suck up all those vital affections of men's souls which should feed and nourish their understandings.

What are all our most sublime speculations of the Deity, that are not impregnated with true godliness, but insipid things that have no taste nor life in them, that do but swell like empty froth in the souls of men ? They do not feed men's souls, but only puff them up and fill them with pride, arrogance, contempt, and tyranny towards those that cannot well ken their subtle curiosities : as those philosophers that Tully complains of in his times, who made their knowledge only matter of ostentation, never caring to square their lives by it. Such as these do but, spider-like, take a great deal of pains to spin a worthless web out of their own bowels, which will not keep them warm. These indeed are those silly souls that are “ ever learning, but never come to the knowledge of the truth.” They may with Pharoah's lean kine, eat up and devour all tongues and sciences, and yet when they have done, still remain lean and ill-favoured as they were at first. Jejune and barren speculations may be hovering and fluttering up and down about divinity, but they cannot settle or fix

themselves upon it. They unfold the plicatures of truth's garment, but they cannot behold the lovely face of it.

We must not think that we have attained to the right knowledge of truth, when we have broke through the outward shell of words and phrases that house it up ; or when by a logical analysis we have found out the dependencies and coherencies of them one with another ; or when, like stout champions of it, having well guarded it with the invincible strength of our demonstrations, we dare stand out in the face of the world, and challenge all those that would pretend to be our rivals.

We have many grave and reverend idolators that worship truth only in the image of their own wits ; that could never adore it so much as they seem to do, were it any thing else but such a form of belief as their own wandering speculations had at last met together in, were it not that they find their own image and superscription upon it.

There is a "knowing the truth as it is in Jesus," as it is in a Christ-like nature, as it is in that sweet, mild, humble, and loving Spirit of Jesus, which spreads itself like a morning sun upon the souls of good men, full of light and life. It profits little to know Christ himself after the flesh ; but he gives his Spirit to good men, that searcheth the deep things of God. There is an inward beauty, life, and loveliness in Divine truth, which cannot be known but only then when it is digested into life and practice. The Greek philosopher could tell those high-soaring Gnostics, that cried out so much, "Look upon God;" "Without virtue and real goodness God is but a name," a dry and empty notion. The profane sort of men, like those old Greeks, may make many ruptures in the walls of God's temples, and break into the holy ground, but yet may find God no more there than they did.

Divine truth is better understood, as it unfolds itself in the purity of men's hearts and lives, than in all those subtle niceties into which curious wits may lay it forth. And therefore our Saviour, who is the great Master of it, would not, while he was here on earth, draw it up into

any system, nor would his disciples after him. He would not lay it out to us in any canons or articles of belief, not being indeed so careful to stock and enrich the world with opinions and notions, as with true piety, and a God-like pattern of purity, as the best way to thrive in all spiritual understanding. His main scope was to promote an holy life, as the best and most compendious way to a right belief. He hangs all true acquaintance with divinity upon the doing God's will, "If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God." This is that alone which will make us, as St. Peter tells us, not "barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour."* There is an inward sweetness in Divine truth, which no sensual mind can taste. This is that natural man that savours not the things of God. Corrupt passions and affections are apt of their own nature to disturb all serene thoughts, to darken our judgments, and warp our understandings. It was a good maxim of the old Jewish writers, the Holy Spirit dwells not in earthly passions. Divinity is not so well perceived by a subtle wit as by a purified sense.

Neither was the ancient philosophy unacquainted with this method of attaining the knowledge of Divine things; and therefore Aristotle himself thought a young man unfit to meddle with morality, till the heat of his youthful affections was moderated. And it is observed of Pythagoras, that he had several ways to try the capacity of his scholars, and to prove the sedateness and moral temper of their minds, before he would entrust them with the sublimer mysteries of his philosophy. The Platonists were herein so wary and solicitous, that they thought the minds of men could never be purged enough from those earthly dregs of sense and passion, in which they were so much

* Gr. οὐκ ἀργός, οὐδὲ ακαργός, neither *idle*, (or *lothful*,) nor *unfruitful*: we shall be diligent, and not in vain, but shall bear fruit to God's glory.

steeped, before they were capable of Divine metaphysics. And therefore they so much solicited “ a separation from the body,” (as they were wont to phrase it) in all those that would sincerely understand Divine truth ; for that was the scope of their philosophy. This was also intimated by them in their defining philosophy to be meditation on death ; aiming herein at a moral way of dying, by loosening the soul from the body and this sensitive life ; which they thought was necessary to a right contemplation of intelligible things. Besides many other ways they had, whereby to rise out of this dark body ; *αναβασις εκ της σκηνης*, as they were all wont to call them, several steps and ascents out of this miry cave of mortality, before they could set any sure footing with their intellectual part on the land of light and immortal being.

Hence we may learn not to devote or give up ourselves to any private opinions or dictates of men in matters of religion. As we should not, like rigid censurers, arraign and condemn the creeds of other men which we comply not with, before a full understanding of them, refined not only by our own reason, but by the benign influence of holy and mortified affection ; so neither should we over-hastily subscribe to the articles of other men. They are not always the best men that blot most paper ; truth is not, I fear, so voluminous, nor swells into such a mighty bulk as our books do. Those minds are not always the most chaste that are most parturient with these learned discourses, which too often bear upon them a foul stain of their unlawful propagation. A bitter juice of corrupt affections may sometimes be strained into the ink of our greatest clerks. We are not always happy in meeting with that wholesome food which hath been dressed by the cleanest hands. Some men have too bad hearts to have good heads. They cannot be good at theory who have been so bad at the practice, as we may fear too many of those, from whom we are apt to take the articles of our belief, have been. Whilst we plead our right to the patrimony of our fathers, we may take too fast pos-

session of their errors. We can never be well assured what our traditional divinity is ; nor can we securely addiet ourselves to any sect of men. He that will find truth, must seek it with a free judgment and a sanctified mind : he that thus seeks, shall find ; he shall live in truth, and that shall live in him ; it shall be like a stream of living waters issuing out of his own soul ; he shall drink of the waters of his own cistern, and be satisfied ; he shall every morning find this heavenly manna lying upon the top of his soul, and be fed with it to eternal life ; he shall find satisfaction within, feeling himself in conjunction with truth, though all the world should dispute against him.

SECT. II.

An Objection against this Method of knowing, answered.

Men want not so much Means of knowing what they ought to do, as Wills to do what they know. Practical Knowledge differs from all other Knowledge, and excels it.

And yet I grant there are some principles of knowledge that are so deeply sunk into the souls of men, that the impression cannot easily be obliterated. Sensual baseness doth not so grossly sully and bemire the souls of all wicked men at first, as to make them deny the Deity, or question the immortality of souls. Neither are the common principles of virtue pulled up by the roots in all. The common notions of God and virtue impressed upon the souls of men, are more clear than any else ; and if they have not more certainty, yet they have more evidence than any geometrical demonstrations. And these are both available to prescribe virtue to men's own souls, and to force an acknowledgment of truth from those that oppose when they are well guided by a skilful hand. Truth needs

not at any time fly from reason, there being an eternal amity between them. Besides, in wicked men there are sometimes distastes of vice, and flashes of love to virtue ; which are the faint strugglings of an higher life within them, which they crucify again by their wicked sensuality. As truth doth not always act in good men, so neither doth sense always act in wicked men. They may sometimes have their sober fits ; and a Divine Spirit breathing upon them may then blow up some sparks of true understanding within them ; though they may soon quench them again, and rake them up in the ashes of their own earthly thoughts.

All this, and more that might be said, may serve to point out the way of virtue. We want not so much means of knowing what we ought to do, as wills to do that which we know. But yet all that knowledge which is separated from an inward acquaintance with virtue and goodness, is of a far different nature from that which ariseth out of a true living sense of them, which is the best discerner thereof, and by which alone we know the true perfection, sweetness, energy, and loveliness of them, and all that which can no more be known by a naked demonstration, than colours can be perceived of a blind man by any definition which he can hear of them.

And further, the clearest notions of truth that shine in the souls of the common sort of men, are extremely clouded, if they be not accompanied with that answerable practice that might preserve their integrity. These tender plants may soon be spoiled by the continual droppings of our corrupt affections upon them ; they are but of a weak and feminine nature, and so may be sooner deceived by that wily serpent of sensuality that harbours within us.

While the soul is full of the body, while we suffer those principles of religion to lie asleep within us ; the power of an animal life will be apt to incorporate and mingle itself with them ; and that reason that is within us becomes more and more infected with those evil opinions that arise

from our corporeal life. The more deeply our souls dive into our bodies, the more will reason and sensuality run one into another, and make up a most unsavory and muddy kind of knowledge. We must therefore endeavour more and more to withdraw ourselves from these bodily things, to set our souls as free as may be from its miserable slavery to this base flesh. We must shut the eyes of sense, and open that brighter eye of our understandings, and that other eye of the soul, which indeed all have, in some degree, but few make use of it. This is the way to see clearly ; the light of the Divine Word will then begin to fall upon us, and those pure coruscations of immortal and ever-living truth will shine out into us, and in God's own light shall we behold him. The fruit of this knowledge will be sweet to our taste, and pleasant to our palates, sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb. The priests of Mercury, as Plutarch tells us, in the eating of their holy things, were wont to cry out, "Sweet is truth." But how sweet and delicious that truth is, which holy and heaven-born souls feed upon in their mysterious converses with the Deity, who can tell but they that taste it? When reason is raised by the mighty force of the Divine Spirit into a converse with God, it is turned into sense. We shall then converse with God not with a struggling and contentious reason, hotly combating with difficulties and divers opinions, and labouring in itself, in its deductions of one thing from another ; but we shall fasten our minds upon him with such a serene understanding, such an intellectual calmness and serenity as will present us with a blissful, steady, and invariable sight of him.

SECT. III.

Man may be considered in a four-fold Capacity, in order to the Perception of Divine Things. That the best and most excellent Knowledge of Divine Things belongs only to the true Christian ; and that it is but in its infancy while he is in the Body.

And now, setting aside the Epicurean herd of brutish men, who have drowned all their sober reason in sensuality, we shall divide the rest of men into these four ranks, with respect to a four-fold kind of knowledge.

The first whereof is that complex and multifarious man that is made up of soul and body, as it were by a just equality of parts and powers in each of them. The knowledge of these men is a knowledge wherein sense and reason are so twisted together, that they cannot easily be unravelled. Their highest reason is complying with their senses, and both conspire together in vulgar opinion : their life being steered by nothing but opinion and imagination. Their notions of God and religion are so entangled with the birdlime of fleshly passions and worldly vanity, that they cannot rise up above the surface of this dark earth, or entertain any but earthly conceptions of heavenly things. Such souls as Plato speaks of, heavy behind, are continually pressing down to this world's centre. And though, like the spider, they may appear sometimes moving up and down in the air, yet they do but sit in the loom, and move in that web of their own gross fancies, which they fasten to some earthly thing or other.

The second is, the man that thinks not fit to view his own face in any other glass but that of reason and understanding ; that reckons upon his soul as that which was made to rule, his body as that which was born to obey, and like an handmaid perpetually to wait upon his higher and nobler part. And in such an one the common prin-

ciples of virtue and goodness are more clear and steady. To such an one we may allow more clear and distinct opinions, as being already in a method, or course of purgation, or at least fit to be initiated into the lesser mysteries of religion. Though they may not be so well prepared for Divine virtue, (which is an higher emanation) yet they are not immature for human, as having the seeds of it already within themselves, which being watered by answerable practice, may sprout up within them.

The third is, he whose soul is already purged by this lower sort of virtue, and so is continually flying off from the body, and returning into himself. Such, in St. Peter's language, are those "who have escaped the pollutions which are in the world through lust." To these we may attribute a lower degree of science, their inward sense of virtue and moral goodness being far transcendent to all mere speculative opinions of it. But if this knowledge settle here, it may be quickly liable to corrupt. Their souls may too much heave and swell with the sense of their own virtue and knowledge: there may be an ill ferment of self-love lying at the bottom, which may puff it up with pride and self-conceit. If this knowledge be not attended with humility and a deep sense of penury and emptiness, we may easily fall short of that true knowledge of God which we seem to aspire after. We may carry such an image of ourselves constantly before us, as will make us lose the clear sight of the Divinity, and be too apt to rest in a mere rational life, without any true participation of the Divine life, if we do not slide back by vain-glory, popularity, or such like vices, into worldly and external vanity.

The fourth is, the true contemplative man, who shooting up above his own rational life, pierceth into the highest life, into the faith which worketh by love: who, by universal love and holy affection, abstracting himself from himself, endeavours the nearest union with the Divine Essence; knitting his own centre, if he have any, unto the centre of the Divine Being. To such an one we may

attribute a true Divine wisdom, powerfully displaying itself in an intellectual life. Such a knowledge is always pregnant with Divine virtue, which ariseth out of an happy union of souls with God, and is nothing else but a living imitation of a God-like perfection drawn out by a strong fervent love of it. This Divine knowledge makes us athirst after Divine beauty, beautiful and lovely ; and this Divine love and purity reciprocally exalts Divine knowledge ; both of them growing up together. Such a life and knowledge as this peculiarly belongs to the true and sober Christian, who lives in him who is life itself, and is enlightened by him who is the truth itself, and is made partaker of the Divine unction, and knoweth all things, as St. John speaks. This life is nothing else but God's own breath within him, and an infant-Christ, (if I may use the expression) formed in his soul, who is in a sense, *απαντασμα της δόξης, the shining forth of the Father's glory.* But yet we must not mistake ; this knowledge is here in its infancy ; there is an higher knowledge, or an higher degree of this knowledge that doth not, that cannot descend upon us in these earthly habitations. Here we can see but in a glass, and that darkly too. Our own imaginative powers, which perpetually attend the highest acts of our souls, will be breathing a gross dew upon the pure glass of our understandings, and so sully and besmear it, that we cannot see the image of the Divinity sincerely in it. But yet this knowledge being a true heavenly fire kindled from God's own altar, begets an undaunted courage in the souls of good men, and enables them to cast a holy scorn upon the poor petty trash of this life, in comparison with Divine things, and to pity those poor, brutish Epicureans that have nothing but the mere husks of fleshly pleasure to feed themselves with. This sight of God makes pious souls breathe after that blessed time when “mortality shall be swallowed up of life,” when they shall no more behold the Divinity through those dark mediums that eclipse the blessed sight of it.

S H O R T D I S C O U R S E

S U P E R S T I T I O N .



CLEM. ALEXANDR. in Admon. ad Græc.

Αρρωτατης αρρωτιας αθεοτης και δεισιδαιμονια, αντικλος μεντης σπερδαγεον.

LACTANTIUS de Vero Cultu.

Hic verus est cultus, in quo mens colentis seipsam D^EO^U immaculatam
victimam sistit.

IBID.

Nihil Sancta et singularis illa Majestas aliud ab homine desiderat,
quam solam innocentiam: quam siquis obtulerit D^EO^U, satis pie, satis
religiose litavit.

OF

SUPERSTITION.

HAVING now done with what we propounded as a preface, we should come to the main heads of religion. But before we do that, perhaps it may not be amiss to inquire into some of those anti-deities that are set up against it; the chief whereof are Atheism and Superstition; which indeed seem to comprehend all kinds of apostasy and prevarication from religion. We shall not be over-curious to pry into such foul and rotten carcasses as these are, but rather inquire a little into the original and immediate causes of them; because they may be nearer of kin than we ordinarily are aware of.

And first for Superstition, (to lay aside our vulgar notion,) it is the same with that temper of mind which the Greeks call $\Delta\varepsilon\sigma\delta\alpha\mu\omega\nu$; it imports “an over-timorous and dreadful apprehension of the Deity.” And therefore the true cause of superstition is nothing else but a false opinion of the Deity, that renders him dreadful and terrible, rigorous and imperious; apt to be angry, but yet impotent, and easy to be appeased by some flattering devotions, especially if performed with sanctimonious shews. I wish the picture of God which some Christians have drawn of him, wherein sourness and arbitrariness appear so much, may not too much resemble it. According to this sense Plutarch hath well defined it, “a strong, passionate opinion, such as is productive of a fear, terrifying a man with the representation of the gods as grievous and hurtful to mankind.”

Such men converse not with the goodness of God, and therefore are apt to attribute their impotent passions to

him. Or, it may be, because some secret advertisements of their consciences tell them how unlike they themselves are to God ; they are apt to be as much displeased with him as they think he is displeased with them. They are apt to count this Divine supremacy as but a piece of tyranny, that by its sovereign will makes too great encroachments upon their liberties, “ fearing heaven’s monarchy as a severe and churlish tyranny, from which they cannot absolve themselves,” as the same author speaks : and therefore he thus discloseth the private whisperings of their minds. “ The broad gates of hell are opened, the rivers of fire and Stygian inundations run down as a swelling flood ; there is thick darkness crowded together ; dreadful and ghastly sights of ghosts screeching and howling ; judges and tormentors ; deep gulfs full of infinite miseries.” The prophet Isaiah gives us this epitome of their thoughts, ch. xxxiii. 14, “ The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites : who shall dwell with the devouring fire ? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings ? ” Though I should not dislike these astonishing thoughts of future torment, which I doubt even good men may have cause to press home upon their own spirits, the more to restrain sin ; yet I think it little commends God, and as little benefits us, to fetch all this horror and astonishment from the contemplations of a Deity, which should always be the most serene and lovely. Our apprehensions of the Deity should be such as might ennable our spirits, and not debase them. A right knowledge of God should beget a freedom and liberty of soul within us, and not servility ; our thoughts of a Deity should breed in us hopes of virtue, and not gender to a spirit of bondage.

But that we may pass on. Because this unnatural resemblance of God as an angry Deity, should it blaze too furiously, like the basilisk, would kill with its looks therefore these painters use their best arts to render less unpleasing. And those that fancy God to be most apt to be displeased, yet are ready to imagine him so im-

potently mutable, that his favour may be won again with their uncouth devotions, that he will be taken with their formal praises. And therefore superstition will always abound in these things, whereby this Deity, made after the similitude of men, may be most gratified, slavishly crouching to it. We shall take a view of it in the words of Plutarch, though what refers to the Jews may seem to contain too hasty a censure of them. “Superstition brings in wallowings in the dust, tumblings in the mire, observations of sabbaths, prosterations, uncouth gestures, and strange rites of worship.” Superstition is very apt to think that heaven may be bribed with such false-hearted devotions ; as Porphyry hath well explained it by this, that it is “an apprehension that a man may corrupt and bribe the Deity :” which (as he before observes,) was the cause of all those bloody sacrifices among the heathen ; like him the prophet, that thought by the fruit of his body, and the firstlings of his flock to expiate the sin of his soul. Micah vi.

It is true, superstition looks not so foul in every soul that is dyed with it ; nor doth it every where spread itself alike : but it will variously discover itself as it is seated in minds of a various temper, and meets with variety of matter to exercise itself about. We shall therefore a little further inquire into it, and what the judgments of the soberest men anciently were of it ; the rather, for that a learned author of our own seems unwilling to own that notion of it which we have hitherto contended for ; who, though he hath freed it from that gloss which the late ages have put upon it, yet may seem to have too strictly confined it to a cowardly worship of the gentile dæmons, as if superstition and polytheism were indeed the same thing ; whereas polytheism, or dæmon worship, is but one branch of it.

That we may the more fully unfold the nature and effects of it, which are not always of one sort, we shall first premise something concerning the rise of it.

The common notions of a Deity, strongly rooted in men’s souls, and meeting with the apprehension of guilt,

are very apt to excite this servile fear. And when men love their own filthy lusts, that they may spare them, they are presently apt to contrive some other ways of appeasing the Deity and compounding with him. Minds, that have no inward foundation of true holiness, are easily shaken from all inward peace and tranquillity. And as the thoughts of some Supreme Power seize upon them, so they are struck into inward affrights, which are further increased by a vulgar observation of those strange and terrifying effects in nature, whereof they can give no certain reason, as earthquakes, thunderings, and lightnings, comets, and meteors, which are apt to terrify those especially who are unsettled and chased with an inward sense of guilt. Petronius Arbiter hath well described this :—

Primus in orbe Deos fecit Timor, ardua cælo
Fulmina cum caderent, discussaque mœnia flammis,
Atque ictus flagraret Athos——

From hence it was that the *Libri Fulgulares* of the Romans, and other such like volumes of superstition, swelled so much, as will easily appear to any one a little conversant in Livy; who every where sets forth this devotion so largely, as if he himself had been passionately in love with it.

And though as the events in nature began to be found out better by a discovery of their natural causes, some particular superstitious customs were antiquated, yet often affrights and horrors were not so easily abated, while they were unacquainted with the Deity, and with the other mysterious events in nature. To which we may add frequent spectres and frightful apparitions. All which extorted such a kind of worship from them as was most correspondent to such causes of it. And those rites and ceremonies which were begotten by superstition, were again the unhappy nurses of it; described by Plutarch, “Observations of unlucky and fatal days, lacerations, howlings, and many times filthy speeches,” and frantick behaviour.

But, as we insinuated before, this root of superstition diversely branched forth itself, sometimes into magic and exorcisms, at other times into pedantical rites and idle observations of things and times. In others it displayed itself in inventing as many new deities as there were several causes from whence their affrights proceeded. And hence it is that we hear of those inhuman and diabolical sacrifices frequent among the heathens, and of those dead men's bones which were found in their temples at the demolishing of them. Sometimes it would express itself in a prodigal way of sacrificing, for which Ammianus Marcellinus, (an heathen writer, but yet one who seems to have been well pleased with the simplicity of Christian religion,) taxeth Julian the emperor. Many other ways might be named wherein superstition might occasionally shew itself.

All which may be best understood, if we consider it as a composition of fear and flattery. Flattery is most incident to base and slavish minds ; and where the fear of a Deity disturbs the filthy pleasure of vice, there this fawning and crouching disposition will find out devices to quiet an angry conscience within, and an offended God without. This the ancient philosophy hath well taken notice of. Thus Maximus Tyrius, "The pious man is God's friend, the superstitious is a flatterer of God. And most happy is the condition of the pious man, God's friend ; but miserable is the state of the superstitious. The pious man, emboldened by a good conscience, and encouraged by the sense of his integrity, comes to God without fear and dread. But the superstitious being sunk through the sense of his own wickedness, comes not without much fear, being void of all hope and confidence, and dreading the gods as so many tyrants." Thus Plato also sets forth this superstitious temper, where he distinguisheth three kinds of tempers in reference to the Deity; total atheism, which, he says, never abides with any man till his old age ; partial atheism, which is a negation of Providence ; and a third, which is a persuasion that the

gods “ are easily won by sacrifices and prayers ;” which he after explains, thus, “ that with gifts unjust men may find acceptance with them.”

All this while I would not be understood to condemn, too severely, all servile fear of God, if it tend to make men avoid true wickedness, but that which settles upon these lees of formality.

To conclude : Were I to define superstition more generally, according to the ancient sense of it, I would call it “ Such an apprehension of God as renders him grievous and burdensome, and so destroys all free and cheerful converse with him ; begetting in the stead thereof a forced devotion, void of inward life and love.” It is that which discovers itself in the worship of the Deity, in any thing that makes up only the body, or outward vesture of religion ; and because it comprehends not the true Divine good, that ariseth to the soul from an internal frame of religion, it is therefore apt to think all its insipid devotions are so many presents offered to the Deity. How variously superstition can discover itself, we have intimated before. To which I shall only add, that we are not rid of superstition, as some imagine, when they have expelled it out of their churches, expunged it out of their books and writings, or cast it out of their tongues, by making innovations in their names. No ; for all this, superstition may enter into our chambers, and creep into our closets, it may twine about our secret devotions, and actuate our forms of belief, when it hath no place else to shroud itself in ; we may think to flatter the Deity by these, when we are grown weary of more pompous solemnities. Nay, it may mix itself with a seeming faith in Christ ; as I doubt it doth now in too many ; who, laying aside all sober and serious care of true piety, think it sufficient to offer up their Saviour, his active and passive righteousness, to a severe and rigid justice, to make expiation for those sins they allow themselves in.

A

SHORT DISCOURSE

or

ATHEISM.

PLUTARCH. Περὶ Δεισιδαιμονίας

Ἐνιοὶ φευγοῦσι τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν, εμπιπλίσιν εἰς αθεστηλὰ τραχεῖαν καὶ αὐλιτικὸν, υπερπηδησάντες εὐ μεσῷ κειμένην τὴν εὐσεβείαν.

OF

A T H E I S M.

WE have now done with superstition, and shall search a little into the pedigree of Atheism, which indeed hath so much affinity with superstition, that it may seem to have the same father with it. *Οὐκ οἰδαί θεούς εἶναι οὐδεὶς,* *δειπνοίδαιμων καὶ βουλεῖται.* Superstition could be well content there were no God, and atheism thinks there is none. And as superstition is engendered by a base opinion of the Deity, as cruel, (though it be afterwards hatched by a slavish fear,) so also is atheism. That sour and ghastly apprehension of God, when it meets with more stout and surly natures, is apt to enrage them, and cankering them with malice against the Deity, provokes them to fight against it, and undermine the notion of it. If these melancholy opinions and disquieting fears of the Deity mould not the minds of men into superstition, as finding them too churlish and untameable to receive any such impressions ; they are then apt to stir them up to contend with that Being which they cannot bear, and to destroy that which would deprive them of their own liberty. These unreasonable fears of a Deity will always be moving into flattery or wrath. Atheism could never have so easily crept into the world, had not superstition made way for it ; it could not so easily have banished the belief of a Deity, had not that first accused and condemned it

as destructive to the peace of mankind ; and therefore it hath always justified and defended itself by superstition. As Plutarch hath well expressed it, “ Superstition afforded the principle of generation to atheism, and afterwards furnished it with an apology ; which, though it be neither true nor lovely, yet wants it not a specious pretence.” And therefore Dionysius Longinus, that noble rhetorician, fears not to challenge Homer as atheistical, for his unsavoury language of the gods ; which indeed was only the brat of his superstition. If the superstitious man thinks that God is altogether like himself, (which indeed is a character most proper to such,) the atheist will soon say in his heart, “ There is no God ;” and will judge it, not without some appearance of reason, to be better there were none. As Plutarch, “ Were it not better for the Gauls and Scythians not to have had any notion of the gods, than to think them such as delighted in the blood of men offered up in sacrifices upon their altars ?” This made Lucretius cry out, with so much indignation, when he took notice of Agamemnon’s diabolical devotion in sacrificing his daughter Iphigenia, to make expiation at his Trojan expedition, *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.* And indeed what sober man could brook such an esteem of himself as this blind superstition, (which overspread the heathen world ; and, I doubt, is not sufficiently rooted out of the Christian,) fastened upon God himself ? Which made Plutarch cry out, “ I had rather men should say that there is no such man, nor ever was, as Plutarch, than to say that he is or was an inconstant, fickle man, apt to be angry, and for every trifle revengeful.”

But it may not be amiss to learn from atheists themselves what was the cause that moved them to banish all thoughts of a Deity, what was the principle upon which this black opinion was built, and by which it was sustained. And this we might have from the confessions of the Epicureans, of which Tully gives us a large account. But we shall rather choose a little to examine Lucretius

in this point, who hath, in the name of all his sect, largely told us the rise and original of this design. After a short ceremony to his following Discourse of Nature, he thus begins his prologue in commendation of Epicurus :

“ *Humana ante oculos fœde cum vita jaceret,
In terris oppressa gravi sub religione,
Quæ caput e cœli regionibus ostendebat
Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans ;
Primum Graius homo mortales tendere contra
Est oculos ausus, priusque obsistere contra :
Quem nec fama Deum, nec fulmina, nec minitanti
Murmure compressit cœlum*”——

And a little after, in a sorry ovation, proudly cries out,

“ *Quare religio pedibus subjecta vicissim
Obteritur ; nos exæquat victoria cœlo.*”

But to proceed : Our author observing the timorous minds of men to have been struck with this dreadful superstition from the observation of some stupendous effects in nature; he therefore, following the steps of his master, Epicurus, undertakes to solve all those knots which superstition was tied up into, by unfolding the secrets of nature; and so begins with a confutation of the opinion of the creation, which he supposed to have sprung up from an admiring ignorance of natural productions.

“ *Quippe ita formido mortales continet omnes,
Quod multa in terris fieri cœloque tuentur,
Quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
Possunt, ac fieri Divino numine rentur.*”

And towards the end of this first book,

“ *Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus, et arctis
Religionum animos nodis exsolvere pergo.*

But herein all the Epicureans (who are not the true fathers of that natural philosophy they brag of, and which indeed Democritus was the author of,) do miserably blunder themselves. For though a lawful acquaintance with the events of nature would contribute much to free men's mind from superstition ; yet would it also breed a sober and amiable belief of the Deity, as it did in all the Pythagoreans, Platonists, and other sects of philosophers ; and an ingenuous knowledge hereof would be as fertile with religion as the ignorance thereof in base minds is with superstition.

For which purpose I shall need only to touch upon Epicurus's master-notion, by which he undertakes to solve all difficulties that might hold our thoughts in suspense a Creator, which is that *plenum* and *inane*, or an infinity of atoms moving to and fro in an empty space, is sufficient to beget all those phenomena which we see in nature. Which, however it might be true, motion being once granted, yet herein Tully hath well scotcht the wheel of this over-hasty philosophy, lib. i. de Finibus, “*Cum in rerum natura duo sint querenda, unum, quæ materia sit ex qua quæque res efficiatur ; alterum, quæ vis sit quæ quidque efficiat : de materia disseruerunt epicurei ; vim et causam efficiendi reliquerunt.*” Which is as much as if some conceited piece of sophistry should go about to prove that an automaton had no dependency upon the skill of an artificer, by descanting upon the several parts of it, without taking notice meanwhile of some external weight or spring that moves it. Or, to use his own similitude, as if one that undertakes to analyze any learned book should tell us how so many letters meeting together in combination should beget all that sense that is contained therein, without minding that wit that cast them all into their several ranks.

And yet could we allow Epicurus this power of motion to be in nature, he must also give us an account how such a power in nature could subsist. Which indeed is

easy to do, if we call in God himself as the mover; but without some infinite power is impossible.

And we should further inquire, how these rambling atoms come to place themselves so orderly in the universe, and observe that absolute harmony in all their motions, as if they kept time with the musical laws of some Almighty Mind that composed all their lessons, and measured out their dances up and down in the universe; and also how it comes to pass, if they be only moved by chance, that such regular mutations and generations should be begotten by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, they having no centre to seat themselves about in an infinite vacuity; and how these bodies that are once moved by some impulse from their former station, return again, or at least come to stay themselves, and do not rather move perpetually the same way the first impulse and direction carried them; or why they do not there rest where their motion first began to cease, if they were interrupted by any thing without them.

Thus we see, though we should allow Epicurus his principle in the frame of nature, yet it is too weak to support that massy bulk of absurdities which he would build upon it.

Lucretius takes notice of another piece of vulgar superstition, which he thinks fit to be chased away by atheism; and that is, "The terrors of the world to come;" which he thus sets upon in his third book :

" —— Animi natura videtur
 Atque animæ claranda meis jam versibus esse,
 Et metus ille foras, preceps Acheruntis agendus
 Funditus, humanum vitam qui turbat ab imo,
 Omnia suffundens mortis nigrore." ——

And afterwards he tells us how this fear of the gods, thus proceeding from the former causes, and from those spectres and ghastly apparitions with which men were sometimes terrified, begat all those fantastic rites and

ceremonies in use amongst them, as their temples, sacred lakes and pools, their groves, altars, images, and other like vanities, as so many idle toys to please these deities with ; and at last concludes himself thus into atheism, as a strong fort to preserve himself from these cruel deities that superstition had made.

*“ Nunc quæ causa Deum per magnas numina gentes
Pervulgarit, et ærarum compleverit urbes,
Suscipiendaque curarit solemnia sacra,
Quæ nunc in magnis florent rebusque locisque ;
Unde etiam nunc est mortalibus insitus horror
Qui delubra Deum nova toto suscitat orbi
Terrarum, et festis cogit celebrare diebus ;
Non ita difficile est rationem reddere verbis.”*

Thus we see how superstition strengthened the wicked hands of atheism ; so far is a formal way of religion proceeding from baseness of mind from keeping it out. And I wish some of our opinions in religion in these days may not have the same evil influences as the notorious superstition of old had.

We should now leave this argument ; only we shall observe two things : “ First, that be superstition never so unlovely a thing, yet it is more tolerable than atheism : therefore we should endeavour to take off superstition from our minds, as a film from our eyes ; but if that cannot be, we must not pluck out our eyes, and blind the faith that we have of the Deity.” The second is this, “ That atheism is a most ignoble and uncomfortable thing.”

What is all that happiness that ariseth from these bodily pleasures to any one that hath any high or noble sense within him ? This gross, muddy, and stupid opinion casts a reproach upon the nature of mankind, and sinks it into the deepest abyss of baseness. And certainly, were the highest happiness of mankind such a thing as might be felt by a corporeal touch ; were it of so ignoble

a birth as to spring out of this earth, and to grow up out of this mire and clay ; we might well sit down, and bewail our unhappy fates, that we should rather be born men than brute beasts, which enjoy more of this world's happiness than we can do, without any sin or guilt. How little of pleasure these short lives taste here, which only lasts so long as the indigency of nature is in supplying, and after that, only a flying shadow, or flitting dream of that pleasure (which is choked as soon as craving nature is satisfied,) remains in the fancy.

And therefore Epicurus, seeing how slippery the soul was to all sensual pleasure, which was apt to slide away perpetually from it, and how little of it the body was capable of ; he and his followers could not well tell where to place this beggarly guest. One while they would place it in the body, then lead it back again into the soul, it being ever found so hard a thing to define, like that base matter of which it is begotten, which is nothing else but a shady kind of nothing, something that hath a name, but nothing else. I dare say that all those that have any just esteem of humanity, cannot but with a noble scorn defy such a base-born happiness as this is, generated only out of the slime of this earth : and yet this is all the portion of atheism, which teaches the entertainers of it to believe themselves nothing else but so many heaps of more refined dust, fortuitously gathered together, which at last must be all blown away again.

But a true belief of a Deity is a sure support to all serious minds, which besides the future hopes it is pregnant with, entertains them here with tranquillity and inward serenity. What the Stoic said in his cool and mature thoughts, “ It is not worth the while to live in a world empty of God and Providence,” is the sense of all those that know what a Deity means. Indeed it were the greatest unhappiness that might be, to have been born into such a world, where we should be perpetually tossed up and down by a rude and blind fortune, and be perpetually liable to all those abuses which the savage lusts

and passions of the world would put upon us. It is not possible for any thing well to bear up the spirit of that man that shall calmly meditate with himself on the true condition of this world, should that mind be taken away from it which governs every part of it, and over-rules all those disorders that break forth in it. Were there not an omniscient skill to temper, and fitly to rank in their due places all those quarrelsome and extravagant spirits that are in the world, it would soon prove an uninhabitable place, and sink under the heavy weight of its own confusion. Remove God and Providence out of the world, and we have nothing to depend upon but chance and fortune, the humours and passions of men ; and he that could then live in it, had need be as blind as these lords would be, that he might not see his own misery always staring upon him ; and had need be more senseless and stupid, that he might not be affected with it.

A

DISCOURSE

DEMONSTRATING THE

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

PHOCYLIDES.

Σωμα γαρ εκ γαῖης εχομεν, και πάντες εσ αὐλην
Λυομενοι κονις εσμεν· αντὶ δ' αυτα πνευμα δεδεκίχι.

HIEROCL. in PYTHAG. auct. carm.

Ου βαλεῖχι ο κακος αθανατον ειναι την εκείνης ψυχην.

OF THE

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

CHAP. I.

The first Principles of Religion, viz. 1. That God is. 2. That God is a Rewarder of them that seek him: wherein is included the great Article of the Immortality of the Soul. These two Principles acknowledged by serious Persons in all Ages. 3. That God communicates himself to mankind by Christ. The Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul discoursed of in the first place, and why.

HAVING finished our two short discourses concerning those two anti-deities, viz. Superstition and Atheism; we shall now proceed to discourse more largely concerning the main heads and principles of religion.

And here we are to take notice of those two points which the author of the epistle to the Hebrews makes the necessary foundation of all religion, viz. “That God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that seek him.” To which we should add, The immortality of the soul, but that may seem included in the former: and indeed we can neither believe any invisible reward of which he there speaks, without supposing the soul’s immortality; nor entertain a serious belief of that, but the notions of punishment and reward will naturally follow from it; we never meet with any who were persuaded of the

the former, that ever doubted of the latter: and therefore the former two have been usually taken alone for the first principles of religion.

We scarce find that any were ever deemed religious, that did not own these two fundamentals. For as to the Sadducees, the Jewish writers are wont commonly to reckon them among the Epicureans, because though they held a God, yet they denied the immortality of men's souls. And these two principles are chiefly aimed at in those two inscriptions upon the temple of Delphos, the one, EI, referring to God, by which title those that came in to worship were supposed to invoke him, acknowledging his immutable and eternal nature; the other, ΤΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΤΤΟΝ, as the admonition of the Deity to all his worshippers, to take notice of the immortality of their own souls.

But if we have the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, we must add to the former, "The communication of God to mankind through Christ;" which last the Scripture treats of at large, so far as concerns our practice, with that plainness and simplicity, that I cannot but think, that whosoever shall ingenuously, and with humility of spirit, addressing himself to God, converse therewith, he will see the bright beams of Divinity shining forth in it, and, it may be, find the text itself much plainer than all those glosses that have been put upon it.

On these three articles of faith and practice, all practical religion is built: the nature of God and of our own immortal souls both shews us what our religion should be, and also the necessity of it; and the doctrine of free grace in Christ, the sweet and comfortable means of attaining to that blessedness which the other teaches us to aim at.

In pursuing of these we shall first begin with the immortality of the soul; which, if it be once cleared, we can neither leave any room for atheism, nor be wholly ignorant what God is.

CHAP. II.

Some Considerations preparatory to the Proof of the Soul's Immortality.

But before we fall closely upon demonstrating the soul's immortality, we shall premise three things :

1. "That the immortality of the soul doth not absolutely need any demonstration, but might be assured rather as a principle, seeing the notion of it is apt to insinuate itself into the belief of the most vulgar sort of men." Men's understandings commonly lead them as readily to believe that their souls are immortal, as that they have any existence at all. And though they be not all so wise as to distinguish aright between their souls and their bodies, or tell what kind of thing that is that they commonly call their soul ; yet they are strongly inclined to believe that some part of them shall survive another, and shall live when the other part shall moulder into dust. And therefore all nations have consented in this belief, which has almost been as vulgarly received as the belief of a Deity, as a diligent converse with history will assure us.

2. The second thing I premise is, "That to a right conceiving the force of any such arguments as may prove the soul's immortality, there must be an antecedent converse with our own souls." It is no hard matter to convince any one, by clear and evident principles fetched from his own sense of himself, who hath well meditated on the power and operations of his own soul, that it is immaterial and immortal. But those very arguments that to such will be demonstrative, to others will lose something of the strength of probability : for indeed it is not possible for us well to know what our souls are, but only by converse with them.

3. There is one thing more to be considered, and it is this, "That no substantial and indivisible thing ever

perisheth." And this Epicurus and all his sect must needs grant, as indeed they do, and much more than I plead for; and therefore they make this one of the first principles of their atheistical philosophy. But we shall here be content with that sober thesis of Plato, who attributes the perpetuation of all substances to the benignity and liberality of the Creator, whom he therefore brings in thus speaking to the angels, those *νεοὶ θεοί*, as he calls them; " You are not of yourselves immortal, nor indissoluble; but would relapse and slide back from that being which I have given you, should I withdraw the influence of my own power from you. But yet you shall hold your immortality by a patent of mere grace from myself." And indeed if we collate all our own observations and experience with such as the history of former times hath delivered to us, we shall not find that ever any substance was quite lost; but though this Proteus-like matter may perpetually change its shape, yet it will constantly appear under one form or another, what art soever we use to destroy it: as it seems to have been set forth in that old riddle of the Peripatetic school, " *Ælia Lælia Crispis, nec mas, nec foemina, nec androgyna, nec casta, nec meretrix, nec pudica; sed omnia.*" All substance is either body, and so divisible, and of three dimensions; or else it is something which is not properly body or matter, and so hath no such dimensions as that the parts thereof should be crowding for place, and justling one with another, not being all able to couch together or run one into another: and this is nothing else but what is commonly called spirit,

CHAP. III.

The first Argument for the Immortality of the Soul.

That the Soul of Man is not corporeal. The gross absurdities upon the supposition that the Soul is made up by a fortuitous concourse of Atoms: which is Epicurus's notion concerning Body. The Principles of the Epicu-

rean Philosophy in opposition to the immaterial Nature of the Soul, discovered to be false and insufficient. That Motion cannot arise from Body or Matter. Nor can the Power of Sensation arise from Matter. Much less can Reason. An addition of three Considerations for the enforcing this first Argument. That there is in Man a Faculty which, 1. Controlls Sense: and, 2. Collects and unites all the Perceptions of our several Senses. 3. That Memory and Prevision are not explicable upon the Supposition of Matter and Motion.

We shall now prove that the soul of man is something really distinct from his body, of an indivisible nature, and so cannot be divided into such parts as should fit one from another; and consequently is apt of its own nature to remain to eternity.

And first we shall prove it *ab absurdo*: if the soul be not of an immaterial nature, then it must be a body, and so made up as all bodies are: where because the opinions of the philosophers differ, we shall only take one, viz. that of Epicurus, which supposeth it to be made up by a fortuitous concourse of atoms; and in that demonstrate against all the rest: (for indeed herein a particular demonstration is an universal, as it is in all mathematical demonstrations of this kind.) For if all that which we call the soul, be nothing but a mere body, and therefore infinitely divisible, as all bodies are, it will be all one whatever notion we have of the generation or production thereof. We may give it, if we please, finer words than Epicurus did. But when we have taken away this disguise, we shall find nothing better than mere body, which will be recoiling back perpetually into its own sluggish passiveness. Though we may think we have quickened it never so much by this subtle artifice of words and phrases, a man's new-born soul will, for all this, be but little better than his body; and, as that is, be but some thin shavings pared off from the body of the parents by a continual motion of the several parts of it; and must

afterwards receive its augmentation from that food and nourishment which is taken in, as the body doth. So that the very grass we walk over in the fields, the dust and mire in the streets that we tread upon, may, according to this dull philosophy, after many refinings, which nature performs by the help of motion, spring up into so many rational souls, and prove as wise as any Epicurean, and discourse as subtilly of what it once was, when it lay drooping in a senseless passiveness.

But because the heavy minds of men are so frequently sinking into this earthly fancy, we shall further search into the entrails of this philosophy ; and see how like that is to a rational soul, which it pretends to declare the production of. Lucretius first of all taking notice of the swiftness of the soul in all its operations, lest his matter should be tired and not able to keep pace with it, first casts the atoms prepared for this purpose into such perfect sperical and small figures, as might be most capable of these swift impressions ; so lib. iii.

*“ At, quod mobile tantopere est, constare rotundis
Perquam seminibus debet, perquamque minutis,
Momine uti parvo possint impulsa moveri.”*

But yet though we should grant all this, how shall we force up these particles of matter into true and real perceptions, and make them perceive their own or others' motions ? How any such thing as sensation, and much more reason, should spring out of this barren soil, no composed mind can imagine. Indeed that infinite variety which is in the magnitude of parts, their positions, figures, and motions, may easily produce an infinite variety of phenomena. And accordingly where there is a sentient faculty, it may receive the greatest variety of impressions from them. Yet cannot the power of sensation arise from them, no more than vision can rise out of a glass, whereby it should be able to perceive the objects that paint themselves upon it, though it were never so exactly polished.

That which we call sensation, is not the motion or impression which one body makes upon another, but a recognition of that motion ; and therefore to attribute that to a body, is to make a body privy to its own acts and passions, to act upon itself, and to have a true and proper self-feeling virtue.

But our author makes a full confession for us in these two points : First, that no sense can judge another's objects, nor convince it of any mistake,

*“ Non possunt alios alii convincere sensus,
Nec porro poterunt ipsi reprehendere sese.”*

If therefore there be any such thing within us as controls our senses, as all know there is ; then must that be of an higher nature than our senses are.

Secondly, that all our sensation is nothing else but perception, and therefore wheresoever there is any mistake, that must arise from something else within us besides the power of sense,

*“ —— quoniam pars horum maxima fallit
Propter opinatus animi, quos addimus ipsi,
Pro visis ut sint, quæ non sunt sensib' visa.”*

In which words he hath very happily lighted upon the proper function of sense, and the true reason of all those mistakes which we call the deceptions of sense, which indeed are not truly so, seeing they arise only from a higher faculty, and consist not in sensation itself, but in those deductions that our judgments draw from it.

Now what we have more generally intimated, we shall further branch out in these two or three particulars :

First, that that power whereby we judge and discern things, is so far from being a body, that it must withdraw itself from all bodily operation whensoever it will nakedly discern truth. For should our souls always mould their judgment of things according to those impressions which seem to be framed thereof in the body, they must then

do nothing else but chain up errors and delusions one with another instead of truth: as should the judgments of our understandings wholly depend upon the sight of our eyes, we should then conclude that our mere accesses and recesses from any visible object have power to change the magnitudes of visible objects, and to transform them into all varieties of figures; and so attribute all that variety to them which we find in our corporeal perceptions; which is an unquestionable argument that that power whereby we discern things, and make judgments of them, is something distinct from the body.

Secondly, we also find such a faculty within our own souls as collects and unites all the perceptions of our several senses, and is able to compare them together; something in which they all meet as in one centre. Now we could not conceive how such an immense variety of impressions could be made upon any piece of matter, which should not obliterate and deface one another.

Thirdly, that knowledge which the soul retains in itself of things past, and in some sort provision of things to come, whereby many grow so sagacious in fore-seeing future events, that they know how to dispose of present affairs, so as to be ready prepared for such emergencies as they see in a train and series of causes which sometimes work but contingently: I cannot think Epicurus himself could in his cool thoughts be so unreasonable as to persuade himself, that all the shuffling and cutting of atoms could produce such a divine piece of wisdom as this. What matter can thus bind up past, present, and future time together? Which while the soul of man doth, it seems to imitate (as far as its own finite nature will permit) God's eternity. And grasping and gathering together a long series of duration into itself, makes an essay to free itself from the rigid laws of it, and to purchase to itself the freedom of a true eternity. And as by its successive operations, it unravels and unfolds the contexture of its own intellectual powers by degrees; so by this memory and provision it recollects and twists them up all

together again into itself. And though it seems to be continually sliding from itself in those several changes which it runs through in the constant varie'y of its own emanations ; yet it is always returning back again to its first original by a swift remembrance of all those motions and operations which have begot in it the first sense of this constant flux. As if we should see a sun-beam perpetually flowing forth from the bright body of the sun, and yet ever returning back to it again ; it never loseth any part of its being, because it never forgets what itself was. And though it may number out never so vast a length of its duration, yet it never comes nearer to its old age, but carrieth a lively sense of its youth and infancy, which it can at pleasure lay fast hold on, along with it.

But if our souls were nothing else but a complex of fluid atoms, how should we be continually roving and sliding from ourselves, and soon forget what we once were ? The new matter that would come in to fill up that vacuity which the old had made by its departure, would never know what the old were, nor what that should be that would succeed : “ The new pilgrim and stranger-like soul would always be ignorant of what the other before it knew, and we should be wholly some other bulk of being than we were before,” as Plotinus hath excellently observed. It was a famous speech of Heraclitus, “ a man cannot enter twice into the same river :” by which he was wont to express the constant flux of matter, which is the most unstable thing that may be. And if Epicurus’s philosophy could free this heap of refined atoms, which it makes the soul to be, from this inconstant and flitting nature, and teach us how it could be some stable and immutable thing, always resting entire while it is in the body ; though we would thank him for such a goodly conceit as this is, yet we would make no doubt that it might as well be able to preserve itself from dissolution out of this gross body, as in it, seeing it is no more secured from the constant impulses of that more

gross matter which is restlessly moving up and down in the body, than it is out of it. And yet for all that we should take the leave to say, such a jewel as this is too precious to be found in a dunghill. Mere matter could never thus stretch forth its feeble force, and spread itself over all its own former pre-existencies. We may as well suppose this dull and heavy earth we tread upon to know how long it hath dwelt in this part of the universe, and what variety of creatures have in all past ages sprung from it, and all those occurrences which have all this time happened upon it.

CHAP IV.

The second Argument for the Immortality of the Soul.

Actions either mechanical or spontaneous. That spontaneous Actions evidence the Distinction of the Soul from the Body. That the Liberty of the Will is inconsistent with the Epicurean Principles. That the Conflict of Reason against the sensitive Appetite argues a Being in us superior to Matter.

We have done with what we intended for the first part of our discourse of the soul's immortality. We have hitherto looked at it rather as a thing complicated with and united to the body; and therefore considered it in those operations, which as they are not proper to the body, so neither are they altogether independent upon it, but are rather of a mixed nature.

We shall now take notice of it in those properties, in the exercise whereof it hath less commerce with the body, and more plainly declares that it is able to subsist and act without the aid of this matter which it informs.

And here we shall inquire, “Whether it hath some kind of action so peculiar to itself, as not to depend upon the body.” And this soon offers itself in the first place to us in those elicit motions of it, as the moralists are

wont to name them; which, though they may end in those they call intemperate acts, yet have their first emanation from nothing else but the soul itself. For this purpose, we shall take notice of two sorts of actions, which are obvious to the experience of every one. The first are those which arise in us without any animadversion; the other are those that are consequent to it.

For we find frequently such motions as in ourselves are, before we take notice of them, and which, by their own turbulency and impetuousness, force us to an advertency; as those fiery spirits, and that inflamed blood which sometimes fly up into the head: or those gross and earthly fumes that disturb our brains; the stirring of many other humours, which beget within us grief, anger, or other passions; which have their rise from such causes as we are not aware of, nor gave consent to create this trouble to us. Besides all those passions and perceptions that are begotten in us by some external motions, which derive themselves through our senses, and fiercely knocking at the door of our understandings, force them sometimes from the deepest musings on some other thing, to open to them, and to give them an audience.

Indeed all our own corporeal actions are not perceived by us, but only those that serve to mainiain a good correspondence between the soul and body, and so cherish that sympathy between them which is necessary for the well-being of the whole man in this state. And therefore there is very little of that which is commonly done in our bodies, which our souls are informed at all of. The constant circulation of the blood through all our veins and arteries; the common motions of our animal spirits in our nerves; the maceration of food within our stomachs, and the distribution of chyle and nourishment to every part that wants it; the constant flux and reflux of more sedate humours within us; the dissipations of our corporeal matter, by insensible transpiration, and the accesses of new in the room of it; all

this we are little acquainted with by any vital energy that ariseth from the union of soul and body. And therefore when we would acquaint ourselves with the anatomy and vital functions of our own bodies, we are obliged to use the same method that we would to find out the same things in any other kind of animal, as if our souls had as little to do with any of these in our own bodies, as they have in the bodies of any other creature.

But, on the other side, we know, that many things that are done by us, are done at the dictate of our own wills ; and therefore all such actions as these are, we know to attribute to their own proper causes, as seeing the propagation of them. We do not, by a naked speculation, know our bodies first to have need of nourishment, and then, by the edict of our own wills, enjoin our spirits and humours to put themselves in an hungry posture within us, by corroding the tunicles of the stomach ; but we first find our own souls solicited by these motions, which yet we are able to gainsay, and to deny those petitions which they offer to us. We commonly meditate and discourse of such arguments as we please. We mould designs, and contrive means answerable thereto, according as the free vote of our own souls determines ; and use our own bodies many times, notwithstanding all the reluctances of nature, only as our instruments to serve the pleasure of our souls. All which, as they evidently manifest a true distinction between the soul and the body, so they do as evidently prove the supremacy and dominion which the soul hath over the body.

Now whatsoever essence finds this freedom in itself, whereby it is absolved from the rigid laws of matter, may know itself also to be immaterial ; and having dominion over its own actions, it will never desert itself ; and can say of all those assaults which are at any time made against those mud-walls, which in this life enclose it, “ This is nothing to me, who am yet free, and can command within, when this feeble carcass is able no longer to obey me ; and when that is broken down, I can

live without it ; for I was not *that*, but had only a command over it, while I dwelt in it."

Before we quit this head, we may add some further strength to it, from the observation of that conflict which the reasons and understandings of men maintain against the sensitive appetite. And wheresoever the higher powers of reason in a man's soul prevail not, but are vanquished by the impetuosity of their sensual affections ; yet are they never so broken but they may strengthen themselves again ; and where they subdue not men's inordinate passions, yet even there will they condemn them for them. Whereas were a man all of one piece, and made up of nothing but matter, these corporeal motions could never control themselves ; these material dimensions could not struggle with themselves, or by their own strength render themselves any thing else than what they are. But this *αὐτεξουσιος ζωη*, as the Greeks call it, this self-potent life, which is in the soul of man, acting upon itself, and drawing forth its own latent energy, finds itself able to tame the outward man, and bring under those rebellious motions that arise from the mere animal powers, and to tame and appease all those seditions and mutinies that it finds there.

CHAP. V.

What it is that, beyond the highest Speculations, does evidence to a good Man the Immortality of his Soul. That true Goodness and Virtue begets the most raised Sense of this Immortality.

We shall add but one thing further to clear the soul's immortality, and it is indeed that which breeds a true sense of it, viz. true and real goodness. Our highest speculations of the soul may beget a sufficient conviction thereof within us, but yet it is only true goodness in men that can make them both know and love, believe and

delight in their own immortality. Though every good man is not so subtile as to be able by fit mediums to demonstrate his own immortality, yet he sees it in a higher light. His soul being purged and enlightened by true sanctity, is more capable of those Divine irradiations, whereby it feels itself in conjunction with God, and the light of Divine goodness mixing itself with the light of its own reason, sees more clearly not only that it may, if it please the Supreme Deity, of its own nature exist eternally, but also that it shall do so. It knows it shall never be deserted of that free goodness that always embraceth it. It knows that Almighty love, by which it lives, to be stronger than death, and more powerful than the grave; it will not suffer those holy ones that are partakers of it to lie in hell, or their souls to see corruption; and though worms may devour their flesh, and putrefaction enter into those bones that fence it, yet it knows that its Redeemer lives, and that it shall at last see him with a pure intellectual eye, which will then be clear and bright, when all that earthly dust, with which converse with this mortal body filled it, shall be wiped out. It knows that God will never forsake his own life which he hath quickened in it; he will never deny those ardent desires of a blissful fruition of himself, which the lively sense of his own goodness hath excited in it. Those breathings and gaspings after an eternal participation of him are but the energy of his own breath within us; if he had had any mind to destroy it, he would never have shewn it such things as he hath done; he would not raise it up to such mounts of vision, to shew it all the glory of that heavenly Canaan flowing with eternal and unbounded pleasures, and then tumble it down again into that deep and dark abyss of death and non-entity. Divine goodness cannot, will not, be so cruel to holy souls that are such ambitious suitors for his love. The more they contemplate the blissful effluxes of his Divine love upon themselves, the more they find themselves strengthened with an undaunted confidence in him; and look not upon

themselves in these poor bodily relations and dependences, but in their eternal alliances, as the sons of God, who is the Father of souls ; souls that are able to live any where in this spacious universe, and better out of this dark cell of bodily matter, which is always checking and clogging them in their noble motions, than in it ; as knowing that when they leave this body, they shall then be received into everlasting habitations, and converse freely and familiarly with that source of life and spirit which they conversed with in this life in a poor disturbed and straitened manner. It is indeed nothing that makes men question the immortality of their souls so much as their own base and earthly loves, which first make them wish their souls were not immortal, and then think they are not.

I might add many more reasons for a further confirmation of this, which are as numerous as the soul's relations and productions themselves are ; but to every one who is willing to do his own soul right, the evidence already brought is more than sufficient.

CHAP. VI.

A main Difficulty concerning the Immortality of the Soul, [viz. The strong Sympathy of the Soul with the Body,] answered.

We have now done with the confirmation of this point, which is the main basis of all religion. Yet I think it may not be amiss briefly to search into one main difficulty concerning the soul's immortality ; and that is, that strange dependency which it seems to have on the body, whereby it seems constantly to comply and sympathize therewith, and to assume to itself the frailties and infirmities thereof, to laugh and languish as it were together with that. And so, when the body is composed to rest, our soul seems to sleep together with it ; and as the

spring of bodily motion seated in our brain is more clear or muddy, so the conceptions of our minds are more distinct or disturbed.

To answer this difficulty, we must take notice, that though our souls be of an incorporeal nature, yet they are united to our bodies, not as assisting forms, as some have thought, but in some more immediate way ; though we cannot tell what that is, it being the great secret in man's nature. But, indeed, to make such a complex thing as man is, it was necessary the soul should be so united to the body as to share in its passions and infirmities so far as they are void of sinfulness. And as the body alone could not perform any act of sensation or reason, so neither would the soul be capable of providing for the necessities of the body, without some feeling and sense of them ; neither could it take sufficient care of this corporeal life, were it not solicited by the indigencies of our bodies. It could not be a mere speculation that would be so sensibly affected with hunger or cold, or other griefs that our bodies partake of, to move our souls to take care for their relief. And were there not such a commerce between our souls and bodies, as that our souls also might be made acquainted by a pleasurable sense of those things that most gratify our bodies, and tend most to the support of their temperament ; the soul would be apt to neglect the body, and commit it wholly to all changes and casualties. Neither would it be any thing more to us than the body of a plant or star ; and therefore that which determines the soul to this body more than that, must be some subtile tie that knits and unites it to it. Heraclitus tells us, there is *odos ανω και κατω*, "a way that leads upwards and downwards," between the soul and body, whereby their affairs are made known to one another. For as our souls could not have sufficient information of the condition of our bodies, except they received some impressions from them ; so neither could our souls make use of our bodies, or derive their own virtue into them, without some intermediate

motions. For as some motions may seem to have their beginning in our bodies, or in some external mover, which are not known by our souls till their advertency be awakened by the impetuousness of them ; so some other motions are derived by our own wills into our bodies, but yet in such a way as they cannot be into any other body ; for we cannot, by the mere power of our wills, move any thing else without ourselves, nor follow any such power by a concurrent sense of those mutations that are made by it, as we do in our own bodies.

And as this conjugal affection between soul and body is thus necessary to the being of mankind, so we may further take notice of some peculiar part within us where all this first begins ; which is the brain, from whence all those nerves that conduct the animal spirits up and down the body, take their first original ; seeing we find all motions that first arise in our bodies to direct their course straight up to that, and all the intemperate motions of our wills issuing forth from the same consistory. Therefore the animal spirits, by reason of their constant mobility and swift motion, ascending to the place of our nerves origination, move the soul, which there sits enthroned, in some mysterious way ; and descending at the beck of our wills from thence, move all the muscles and joints in such sort as they are directed by the soul. And if we observe the subtile mechanics of our own bodies, we may easily conceive how the least motion in these animal spirits will, by their relaxing or distending the nerves, membranes and muscles, according to their different quantity, or the celerity and quality of their motions, beget all kinds of motions likewise in the organical parts of our bodies.

And because the soul hath all corporeal passions and impressions thus conveyed to it, without which it could not express a due benevolence to the body ; therefore, as the motions of these animal spirits are more or less disorderly and confused, or gentle and composed ; so those

souls especially who have not by grace the dominion over them, are also more or less affected proportionably in their operations. And therefore, to question whether the soul, that is of an immortal nature, can entertain these corporeal passions, is to doubt whether God could make a man, or not, and to question that which we find by experience in ourselves ; for we find both that it doth thus, and yet that the original of these is sometimes from our bodies, and sometimes again by the force of our wills they are impressed upon our bodies.

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE

OF

G O D.

M. T. CICERO, Lib. 1, De Legibus.

Ex tot generibus nullum est animal præter hominem quod habeat
notitiam aliquam Dei: ipsisque in hominibus nulla gens est neque
tam immansueta, neque tam fera, quæ non, etiamsi ignoret qualem
habere Deum deceat, tamen habendum sciat.

OF THE
EXISTENCE AND NATURE
OF
G O D.

CHAP. I.

*That the best Way to know God is by an attentive
Reflection upon our own Souls. God more clearly
and lively pictured upon the Souls of Men than upon
any Part of the sensible World.*

WE now come to the other principle of all religion, and treat something concerning God. Where we shall not so much demonstrate that he is, as what he is. Both which we may best learn from a reflection upon our own souls. He which reflects upon himself reflects upon his own Original, and finds the clearest impression of some eternal nature and perfect Being stamped upon his own soul. And therefore Plato seems sometimes to reprove the ruder sort of men in his times for their contrivance of pictures and images to put themselves in mind of the Θεοι, or angelical beings, and exhorts them to look into their own souls, which are the fairest images not only of the lower divine natures, but of the Deity itself; God having so copied himself in the whole life and energy of

man's soul, as that the lovely characters of divinity may be most easily seen and read of all men within themselves: as they say of Phidias, the famous statuary, after he had made the statue of Minerva with the greatest exquisiteness of art, to be set up in the Aeropolis of Athens, impressed his own image so deeply in her buckler, that none could rase it out. And if we would know what the impress of souls is, it is nothing but God himself, who could not write his own name so as that it might be read but only in rational natures. Neither could he make such without imparting such an imitation of his own eternal understanding to them as might be a perpetual memorial of himself within them. And whenever we shall look upon our own soul in a right manner, we shall find a Urim and Thummim there, by which we may ask counsel of God himself, who will have this always borne upon its breast-plate.

There is nothing that so embases the souls of men, as the dreadful thoughts of their own mortality, which will not suffer them to look beyond this short span of time, or to look higher than these material heavens; which though they could be stretched forth to infinity, yet would the space be too narrow for an enlightened mind, that will not be confined within the compass of corporeal dimensions. These black opinions of death, and the nonentity of souls, (darker than hell itself,) shrink up the free-born spirit which is within us, which would otherwise be dilating and spreading itself boundlessly beyond all finite being. And when these mists are once blown away, it finds this narrow sphere of being to give way before it; and having once seen beyond time and matter, it finds then no more bounds to stop its restless motion. It may then fly upwards from one heaven to another, till it be beyond all orb of finite being, swallowed up in the boundless abyss of divinity, beyond all that which darker thoughts are wont to represent under the idea of essence. Those dismal apprehensions which pinion the souls of men to mortality, check and starve that noble life thereof,

which would always be rising upwards, and spread itself in a free heaven. And when once the soul hath shaken off these, when it is once able to look through a grave, and see beyond death, it finds a vast immensity of being opening itself more and more before it, and the ineffable light and beauty thereof shining more and more into it ; when it can rest and bear up itself upon an immaterial centre of immortality within, it will then find itself able to bear itself away by a self-reflection into the contemplation of an eternal Deity.

For though God hath copied forth his own perfections in this visible and sensible world, according as it is capable of entertaining them ; yet the most clear and distinct copy of himself could be imparted to none but intelligible natures. And though the whole fabric of this visible universe be whispering out the notions of a Deity, and always inculcates this lesson to the contemplators of it, God made me ; yet we cannot understand it without some interpreter within. The heavens indeed declare the glory of God, and the firmament shews his handy-work, and that which may be known of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, as St. Paul tells us, is to be seen in these external appearances : yet it must be something within that must instruct us in all these mysteries, and we shall then best understand them, when we compare that copy which we find of them within ourselves, with that which we see without us. The schoolmen have well compared sensible and intelligible beings in reference to the Deity, when they tell us that the one only represents the footsteps, the other the face of God. We shall therefore here inquire what that knowledge of a Deity is, which a due converse with our own naked understandings will lead us into.

CHAP. II.

How the Contemplation of our own Souls, and a right Reflection upon the Operations thereof, may lead us into the Knowledge of, 1. The Divine Unity and Om-niscience, 2. God's Omnipotence, 3. The Divine Love and Goodness, 4. God's Eternity, 5. His Omnipresence, 6. The Divine Freedom and Liberty.

It being our design to discourse more particularly of that knowledge of the Deity that we may learn immediately from ourselves, we shall observe,

First, There is nothing whereby our own souls are better known to us than by the properties and operations of reason. But when we reflect upon our own idea of pure and perfect reason, we know that our own souls are not it, but only partake of it ; and yet we know certainly that it is, as finding from an inward sense of it that both we and other things else beside ourselves partake of it, neither do we nor any finite thing contain the source of it within ourselves. And because we have a distinct notion of the most perfect mind and understanding, we own our deficiency therein. And as that idea of understanding which we have within us points not out to us this or that particular, but something which is neither this nor that, but total understanding ; so neither will any elevation of it serve every way to fit and answer that idea. And therefore when we find that we cannot attain to science but by a discursive deduction of one thing from another, that our knowledge is confined, and is not adequate and commensurate to the largest sphere of being, it not running quite through it, nor filling the whole area of it ; or that our knowledge is successive, and cannot grasp all things at once, but works by intervals, and runs out into division and multiplicity ; we know all this is from want of reason and understanding, and that a pure and simple mind is free from all these

restraints and imperfections, and therefore can be no less than infinite. As this idea which we have of it in our own souls will not suffer us to rest in any conception thereof which represents it less than infinite ; so neither will it suffer us to conceive of it any otherwise than as one simple being. And could we multiply understandings into never so vast a number, yet should we be again collecting and knitting them up together in some universal one. So that if we rightly reflect upon our own minds, and the method of their energies, we shall find them to be so framed as not to admit of any other than one infinite source of all that reason and understanding which themselves partake of, in which they live, move, and have their being. And therefore, in the old theology, an original and uncreated *Movas*, or *Unity* is made the fountain of all peculiarities and numbers, which have their existence from the efflux of its almighty power.

And that is the next thing which our own understandings will instruct us in concerning God, viz. his eternal power. For as we find a will and power within ourselves to execute the results of our own reason, so far as we are not hindered by some potent cause : so we know it must be a mighty inward strength that must enable our understandings to their proper functions, and that life, energy, and activity can never be separated from a power of understanding. The more unbodied any thing is, the more unbounded also is it in its effective power : body and matter being the most sluggish and unwieldy thing that may be, having no power from itself nor over itself : and therefore the purest mind must also needs be the most almighty life and spirit ; and as it comprehends all things, and sums them up together in its infinite knowledge, so it must also comprehend them in all its own life and power. Again, that which produced that substantial life and mind by which we know ourselves, must be something much more mighty than we are, and can be no less indeed than omnipotent, and must also be the first archi-

tect of all other beings, and the perpetual supporter of them.

We may also know from the same principles, that an almighty love, every way commensurate to that most perfect being, eternally rests in it, which is as strong as that is infinite, and as full of life and vigour as that is of perfection. And because it finds no beauty nor loveliness but only in that and the issues thereof, therefore it never does nor can fasten upon any thing else. And therefore the divinity always enjoys itself and its own infinite perfections, seeing it is that eternal and stable sun of goodness that neither rises nor sets, is neither eclipsed nor can receive any increase of light and beauty. Hence the Divine love is never attended with those turbulent passions whereby our love is wont to unfold its affections towards its object. But as the Divine love is perpetually most infinitely ardent and potent, so it is always calm and serene, unchangeable, having no such ebbings and flowings as that love hath in us which ariseth from the weakness of our understandings, that do not present things to us always in the same lustre and beauty: neither we nor any other worldly thing, (all which are in a perpetual flux,) are always the same. Besides, though our love may sometimes transport us and violently rend us from ourselves and from all self-enjoyment, yet the more forcible it is, by so much the more it will be apt to torment us, while it cannot centre itself in that which it so strongly endeavours to attract to it; and when it possesseth most, yet is it always hungry and craving, it may always be filling itself, but, like a leaky vessel, it will be always emptying itself again. Whereas the infinite ardour of the Divine love, arising from the unbounded perfection of the Divine being, always rests satisfied within itself, is wrapped up and rests in the same central unity in which it first begins.

When we reflect upon all this, which signifies some perfect essence, as a mind, wisdom, understanding, omi-

nipotency, goodness, we may also know God to be eternal and omnipresent, not because he fills either place or time, but rather because he wanteth neither. That which first begets the notion of time in us, is nothing else but that succession and multiplicity which we find in our own thoughts, which move from one thing to another, as the sun in the firmament is said to have his several stages to pass by. And therefore where there is no such vicissitude or variety, as there can be no sense of time, so there can be nothing of the thing. This world is indeed a great clock to itself, and is continually numbering out its own age; but it cannot lay any sure hold upon its own past revolutions, nor can it gather up its infancy and old age, and couple them together. Whereas an infinitely comprehensive mind hath a simultaneous possession of its own never-flitting life; and because it finds no succession in its own immutable understanding, it cannot find any thing whereby to measure its own duration. And as time lies in the basis of all finite life, whereby it is enabled by degrees to display all the virtue of its own essence, which it cannot do at once; so such an eternity lies at the foundation of the divinity, whereby it becomes one "without any shadow of turning," as St. James speaks, without any variety or multiplicity within himself, which all created beings that are carried down in the current of time partake of.

As we conceive of God's eternity, we may in a correspondent manner apprehend his omnipresence; not so much by an infinite expanse or extension of essence, as by an unlimited power. For as nothing can ever stray out of the bounds, or get out of the reach of an almighty mind; so when we barely think of mind or power, or any thing else peculiar to the Divine essence, we cannot find any of the properties of quantity mixing themselves with it: and as we cannot confine it in regard thereof to any one point of the universe, so neither can we well conceive it extended through the whole, or excluded from any part of it. It is always some material being that

contends for space. Bodily parts will not lodge together, and the more bulky they are, the more they jostle for room one with another. Bodily beings are great only in bulk, but Divine essences in virtue and power.

We may in the next place consider that freedom and liberty which we find in our own souls, which is founded in our reason and understanding ; and this is therefore infinite in God, because there is nothing that can bound the first mind, or disobey an almighty power. We must not conceive God to be the freest agent, because he can do and prescribe what he pleaseth, and so set up an absolute will which shall make both law and reason as some imagine. For as God cannot know himself to be any other than what he is ; so neither can he will himself to be any thing else than what he is, or that any thing else should swerve from those laws which his own eternal nature prescribes to it. For this were to make God free to dethrone himself, and set up a liberty within him that should contend with the royal prerogative of his own boundless wisdom.

To be short : when we converse with our own souls, we find the spring of all liberty to be nothing else but reason ; and therefore no unreasonable creature can partake of it. And that it is not so much any indifference in our wills of determining without, much less against, reason as the free choice of that which our understandings propound to us as most expedient. And our liberty most appears, and flows forth in the fullest stream, when its object is most full, and the acquaintance with it most ample : all liberty in the soul being a kind of liberality in bestowing of our affections, and the want or scarce measure of it parsimoniousness and niggardness. And therefore the more the results of our judgments tend to an indifference, the more we find our wills in suspense what to choose ; contrary inclinations arising and falling within interchangeably, as the scales of a balance equally laden with weights ; and all this while the soul's liberty is nothing else but a fluctuation between uncertainties,

and languishing away in the impotency of our understandings. Whereas the Divine understanding beholding all things most clearly, must needs beget the greatest freedom that may be; which freedom as it is bred in it, so it never moves without the compass of it. And though the Divine will be not determined alway to this or that particular, yet it is never bereft of eternal light and truth to act by. And therefore though we cannot see a reason for all God's actions, yet we may know they were neither done against it nor without it.

CHAP. III.

How the Consideration of those restless Motions of our Wills after some supreme Good, leads us to the Knowledge of a Deity.

WE shall once more take a view of our own souls, and observe how the motions thereof lead us to the knowledge of a Deity. We always find a restless appetite within, which craves some supreme good, and will not be satisfied with any thing less than infinity itself; as if our own penury and indigency were commensurate to the Divine fulness. We find by experience our souls cannot live upon that thin diet they are entertained with at home; neither can they be satiated with those insipid morsels which this outward world furnisheth their tables with. I cannot think that the most voluptuous Epicurean could ever satisfy the cravings of his soul with corporeal pleasure, though he might endeavour to persuade himself there was no better: nor the Stoicks find a self-sufficiency and tranquillity within their own souls, arising out of the pregnancy of their own reason; though their sullen thoughts would not suffer them to be beholden to an higher Being for their happiness. The more we endeavour to extract self-sufficiency out of our own souls, the more we torment them, and force them to feel their

own pinching poverty. Ever since our minds became so dim-sighted as not to pierce into that primitive blessedness which is above, our wills are too big for our understandings, and will believe their beloved prey is to be found where reason discovers it not. They will pursue it through all the vast wilderness of this world, and force our understandings to follow the chase with them : nor may we think to tame this violent appetite, to allay the heat of it, except we can look upward to some eternal and almighty goodness which is alone able to master it.

It is not the nimbleness of our own reason which stirs up these hungry affections within us, (for then the most ignorant sort of men would never feel the sting thereof,) but indeed some more potent nature which hath planted a restless motion within us that might more forcibly carry us out to itself ; and therefore it will never suffer itself to be controlled by any of our thin speculations, or satisfied with those airy delights that our fancies offer to it : it doth not, it cannot, rest itself any where but upon the centre of some almighty good, some solid and substantial happiness ; like the hungry child that will not be stilled by all the mother's music, or change its angry looks for her smiling countenance ; nothing will satisfy it but the full breasts.

The whole work of this world is nothing but a perpetual contention for true happiness, and men are scattered up and down in the world, moving to and fro therein to seek it. Our souls, by a natural science as it were feeling their own original, are perpetually travailing with their new designs and contrivances whereby they may purchase high ambitions. Happiness is that pearl of price which all adventure for, though few find it. It is not gold or silver that the earthlings of this world seek after, but some satisfying good which they think is there treasured. Neither is it a little empty breath that ambition soars after, but some kind of happiness that it thinks to catch with it.

And thus when men most of all fly from God, they

still seek after him. Wicked men pursue indeed a deity in their worldly lusts, wherein yet they most blaspheme; for God is not a mere empty name, but that self-sufficient good which brings the rest with it which they so much seek after, though they join it with something which it is not, and in a true and real strain of blasphemy, attribute all that which God is to something else which is most unlike him, and, "turn the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible man, of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

God is not better defined to us by our understandings than by our wills and affections. He is not only the eternal reason, that almighty mind and wisdom which our understandings converse with; but he is also that unstained beauty and supreme good which our wills are perpetually catching after. And wheresoever we find true beauty, love, and goodness, we may say, here or there is God. And as we cannot understand any thing of an intelligible nature, but by some primitive idea we have of God, whereby we are able to guess at the elevation of its being, and the pitch of its perfection; so neither do our wills embrace any thing, without some latent sense of him, whereby they can taste and discern how near any thing comes to that self-sufficient good they seek after. And indeed without such a faculty as this is we should never know when our souls are in conjunction with the Deity, or be able to relish the ineffable sweetness of true happiness. Though here below we know but little what this is, because we are little acquainted with enjoyment; we know well what belongs to longings and languishment, but we know not so well what belongs to plenty and fulness; we are well acquainted with griefs and sicknesses of this inbred love, but we know not what its health and complacencies are.

To conclude this particular, the soul hath strong and weighty motions, and nothing can bear it up but something permanent and immutable. Nothing can beget a constant serenity within, but something supreme to its

own essence ; as if, having once departed from the primitive fountain of its life, it were deprived of itself, perpetually contesting within itself and divided against itself. And this evidently proves to our inward sense, that there is some higher good than ourselves, something that is more amiable and desirable, and therefore must be loved and preferred before ourselves.

CHAP. IV.

INFERENCES FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF THE DIVINE NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES.

- I. *That all Divine Productions are the free Effluxes of omnipotent Love and Goodness. The true Notion of God's Glory what it is. Men very apt to mistake in this Point. God needs not the Happiness or Misery of his Creatures to make himself glorious by. God does most glorify himself by communicating himself: we most glorify God when we resemble him most.*

WE have seen how we may rise up to the understanding of the Deity by the contemplation of our own souls : and now it may seem worthy of the best attention of our minds to consider some inferences which naturally flow from the true knowledge of the Divine nature and attributes.

The first is this, “That all Divine productions or operations that terminate in something without him, are nothing else but the free effluxes of his own omnipotent love and goodness,” which always moves along with them, and never willingly departs from them. When God made the world it was not out of a piece of self-interest, as if he had had any design to advance himself, or to enlarge his own stock of glory and happiness ; for what beauty or perfection can be in this whole creation which was not before contained in himself as the free fountain of all. Or what could he

see out of himself that could add any thing to his own stature? I know not how it comes, that some bring in God as it were casting about how he might erect a new monopoly of glory to himself, and so making the world, that he might have a stock of glory going in it. I doubt we are wont sometimes to paint him too much in the likeness of corrupt and impotent men, that by a fond ambition please themselves with their own praises chanted out to them by their admirers, and another while as much applaud their own greatness, to hear what hideous cries the severity of their power can extort from those they have a mind to make miserable.

We all speak much of the glory of God, and entertain a common belief that it is the only end for which we were all made. And I wish we were all more inwardly moved with a true and lively sense of it. There can be nothing else that either God could propound to himself, or that we ought, if it be rightly understood. But we must not think that God, who is infinite fulness, would seek for any thing without himself. He needs neither our happiness nor our misery to make himself more illustrious by; but being full in himself, it was his good pleasure to communicate of his own fulness. "How can he look without himself, being a pure mind, always encompassed with its own glorious brightness?" But the good pleasure of his will being filled with bounty, and the power of a most gracious Deity proceeding from it, liberally dispensed themselves, and distributed those gifts of grace that might make all created being resemble themselves." God himself being infinitely full, and having enough and to spare, is always overflowing; and goodness and love issue forth from him by way of redundancy. When he made the world, because there was nothing better than himself, he shadowed forth himself therein, and, as far as might be, was pleased to represent himself and manifest his own eternal glory and perfection in it. When he is said to seek his own glory, it is indeed nothing else but to ray and beam

forth, as it were, his own lustre, in the happiness of his creatures.

God does then glorify and exalt himself in the most triumphant way that may be, when he most of all communicates himself, and when he erects monuments of his majesty wherein his love and goodness may live and reign. And we then most of all glorify him, when we partake most of him, when our serious endeavours of a true conformity to his image declare that we think nothing better than he is; and are therefore most ambitious of being one with him by an universal resignation of ourselves unto him. This is his glory in its lowest humiliation, while it beams forth out of himself; and our happiness in its exaltation, which heaven never separates, though earth doth. His honour is his love and goodness in paraphrase, spreading itself over all those that receive it; and this he loves and cherishes wheresoever he finds it, as something of himself therein.

CHAP. V.

A SECOND DEDUCTION.

II. That all Things are supported and governed by an Almighty Wisdom and Goodness. An Answer to an Objection made against the Divine Providence from an unequal Distribution of Things here below.

IN the next place we may gather, “That that Almighty Wisdom and Goodness, which first made all things, doth also perpetually conserve and govern them;” deriving themselves through the whole fabric, and seating themselves in every finite essence, lest falling off from the Deity, they should become altogether disorderly, relapsing and sliding back into the first chaos. As in all motion there must be some first mover, from whence the beginning and perpetuation of all motion is deduced: so in

beings there must be some first essence upon which all others must constantly depend. For, as no finite thing can subsist by its own strength, or take its place upon the stage of space without the leave of an almighty and supreme Power: so neither can it remain here without licence and assistance from it. The Deity is the centre of all finite being, the foundation and basis of every one of these weak essences, which cannot bear up themselves by any central power of their own; as we may be assured from a sensible feeling of the constant mutations and impotency which we find both in ourselves and all other things.

And as God thus preserves all things, so he is continually ordering and disposing all things in the best way, and providing so as may be best for them. He did not make the world as a mere exercise of his almighty power, or to try his own strength, and then throw it away from himself without any more minding of it; for he is that omnipresent life that penetrates and runs through all things, containing and holding all fast together within himself; and therefore the ancient philosophy was wont rather to say, that the world was in God, than that God was in the world. He did not look without himself to search for some solid foundation that might bear up this weighty building, but indeed reared it up within him, and spread his own omnipotency under it and through it. And being centrally in every part of it, he governs it according to his own unsearchable wisdom and goodness, and orders all things for the best.

And now if any should quarrel with the unequal distribution of things here, as if some blind fortune had bestowed her blessings carelessly till she had no more left, rather than some all-knowing mind that deals forth its bounty in due proportions, I should send them to Plutarch and Plotinus to have their reasons fully satisfied in this point, (for we here deal with the principles of natural light) all these debates arising from nothing but carnal notions of good and evil: as if it were so gallant a thing

to be dealing with crowns and sceptres, to be bravely arrayed, and wallow in that which is called the wealth of this world. God indeed never took any such notice of good men as to make them all rulers, as the last of those fore-cited authors tells us ; neither was it worth the while, “ neither is it fit for good men that partake of an higher life than the most princely is, to trouble themselves about lording and ruling over other men ; as if such a splendid kind of nothing were of so much worth. It is much better for us, that Providence should disorder and deface these things, that we might be weaned from the love of them, than that their lovely looks should so enchant our souls as to draw them off from better things. And I dare say that a sober mind, that shall contemplate the temper of men’s minds, and the confused frame of this outward world, will admire the infinite wisdom of a gracious Providence in permitting that disorder which is in it.

CHAP. VI.

A THIRD DEDUCTION.

III. *That all true Happiness consists in a Participation of God, arising out of the Conformity of our Souls to him ; and, that the most real Misery ariseth out of the Apostasy of Souls from God.*

We proceed now to another inference, viz. “ That all true happiness consists in a participation of God, arising out of the conformity of our souls to him ; and the most real misery ariseth out of the apostasy of souls from God.” And so we are led to speak of the rewards and punishments of the life to come. And it will not be hard, from what hath been said, to find out the original and nature of both of them ; and though perhaps we cannot dive into the bottom of them, yet we may tell how in a general way to define and distinguish them.

Happiness is nothing else but the enjoyment of some

chief good ; and therefore the Deity is so boundlessly happy, because he is every way one with his own immense perfection : and every thing so much the more feelingly lives upon happiness by how much the more it comes to partake of God, and to be made like to him. And as it is impossible to enjoy happiness without a fruition of God, so it is impossible to enjoy him without an assimilation and conformity of our natures to him in true goodness and god-like perfection. It is a maxim of Socrates, *μη καθαρὰ καθαρές εφαπτέοθαι μη καὶ θεμιτον οὐ*, “ It is not lawful for any impure nature to touch pure Divinity.” For we cannot enjoy God by any external conjunction with him. Divine fruition is not by a mere kind of apposition or contiguity of our natures with the Divine, but it is an internal union, whereby a Divine Spirit informing our souls, derives the strength of a Divine life through them. It must be some Divine efflux running quite through our souls, awakening and exalting all the vital powers of them into an active sympathy with some absolute good, that renders us completely blessed. It is not to sit gazing upon a Deity by some thin speculations ; but it is an inward feeling and sensation of this mighty goodness displaying itself within us, melting our fierce and furious natures, that would fain be something in contradiction to God, into an universal compliance with itself, and wrapping up our minds wholly into itself, whereby God comes to be all in all to us. And therefore, so long as our wills and affections endeavour to fix upon any thing but God and true goodness, we do but endeavour to wring happiness out of something that will yield no more than a flinty rock to all our pressing. The more we endeavour to force out our affections to rest themselves upon any finite thing, the more violent will they recoil upon us. It is only a true sense and relish of God that can tame and master that rage of our insatiable and restless desires which is still forcing us out of ourselves to seek some perfect good, which, from a latent sense of our own souls, we feel ourselves to want.

The foundation of heaven and hell is laid in men's own souls, in an ardent and vehement appetite after happiness, which can neither attain to it, nor miss finally of it, without a quick and piercing sense. Our souls are not like so many lumps of dead and senseless matter, they are not like these dull clods of earth which scent not the good or ill savour of those plants that grow upon them. Gain and loss are very sensibly felt by greedy minds. The soul of man was made with so large a capacity, that it might be better fitted to entertain a full happiness, that the Divine love and goodness might more freely spread itself in it, and unite it to itself. And accordingly, when it misseth of God, it must feel so much the more the fury and pangs of misery, and find a severe pain arising out of its guilty conscience, which, like a fiery scorpion, will fasten its stings within it. And thus, as heaven, love, joy, peace, serenity, and all that which happiness is, buds and blossoms out of holy and god-like spirits ; so also hell and misery (were there no other hell,) will perpetually spring out of impure minds, distracted with envy, malice, ambition, self-will, or any inordinate loves to any particular thing.

This is that fatal law made in heaven, That holiness shall be happy, and vice and sin miserable. Holiness of mind will more and more attract God to itself, as vice will slide more and more from him. The more pure our souls are, the more sincerely will they endeavour the nearest union that may be with God, the more they will pant and breathe after him alone, leaving the chase of any other delight. There is such a noble and free-born spirit in true goodness, seated in immortal natures, as will not be satisfied merely with innocency, nor rest itself in this mixed bodily state, though it could converse with bodily things without sinking to a vicious love of them ; but would always be returning to a more intimate union with that Being from whence it came, and which will be drawing it more and more to itself.

CHAP. VII.

A FOURTH DEDUCTION.

IV *The true Notion of Divine Justice, That the proper Design of it, is to preserve Righteousness, to promote and encourage true Goodness. That it does not primarily intend Punishment, but only as a Means to prevent Transgression.*

In the fourth place, we may collect the notion of Divine justice, the scope whereof is nothing else but to assert and establish eternal law and right, and to preserve the integrity thereof; it is no design of vengeance which, though God takes on wicked men, yet he delights not in it. The Divine justice first prescribes that which is most conformable to the Divine nature, and mainly pursues the conservation of righteousness. We would not think him a good ruler that should give laws to ensnare his subjects with an even indifferency of mind whether his laws were kept, or punishments suffered; but such a one who would make the best security for right and equity by wholesome laws, and annexing punishments as a mean to prevent transgression, and not to manifest severity. The proper scope of justice seems to be nothing else but the preserving that which is just and right. The scope of that justice which is in any righteous law, is properly to provide for a righteous execution of that which is just and fit to be, without intending punishment; for to intend that properly and directly, might rather seem cruelty than justice. And therefore justice takes not up punishment, but only for a security of performance of righteous laws, viz. either for the amendment of the person transgressing, or an example to others to keep them from transgression.

Again, justice is the justice of goodness, and so cannot delight to punish; it aims at nothing more than the

maintaining and promoting goodness, and hath always some good end before it, and therefore would never punish except some further good were in view.

True justice never supplants any, that it may appear more glorious in their ruins ; for this would be to make justice love something better than righteousness, and to magnify itself in something which is not itself, but rather an aberration from itself. And therefore God himself so earnestly contends with the Jews about the equity of his own ways, with frequent asseverations that his justice is thirsty after no man's blood, but rather that sinners would repent, turn from their evil ways, and live. And then justice is most advanced, when the contents of it are fulfilled ; and though it does not, and will not acquit the guilty, without repentance, yet the design of it is to encourage innocency, and promote true goodness.

CHAP VIII.

THE LAST DEDUCTION.

V That, seeing there is such an intercourse between God and Men, there is also some Law between them, which is the Bond of all Communion. “ The primitive Rules of God’s Economy in this World, were not the sole Result of an absolute Will, but the sacred Decrees of Reason and Goodness. God could not design to make us sinful and miserable. Of the Law of Nature embosomed in Man’s Soul, how it obliges Man to love and obey God, and to express a God-like Spirit and Life in this World.

The former deduction leads me to another, viz. “ That seeing there is such an intercourse between God and men, there is also some law between them, which is the bond of all communion.” God himself, from whom all law takes its rise, is not without all law, nor, in a sober sense, above it. Neither are the primitive rules of his economy in this world the sole result of an absolute will,

but the sacred decrees of reason and goodness. I cannot think God to be so unbounded in his legislative power, that he can make any thing law, that we may sometimes imagine. We cannot say indeed that God was absolutely determined, from some law within himself, to make us ; but I think we may safely say, when he had once determined to make us, he could neither make us sinful, seeing he had no shadow of evil within himself, nor lay up those dreadful fates within our natures, or set them over us, that might, *arcana inspiratione*, by a conceited influence, (as some are pleased to phrase it) secretly work our ruin, and silently carry us on, making use of our own natural infirmity, to eternal misery. Neither could he design to make his creatures miserable, that so he might shew himself just. These are rather the by-ways of cruel and ambitious men, that seek their own advantage in the mischiefs of other men, and contrive their own rise by their ruins : this is not Divine justice, but the cruelty of degenerated men.

But as the Divinity could propound nothing in the making the world but the communication of his own love and goodness ; so he can never swerve from the same end in the dispensation of himself to it. Neither did God so boundlessly enlarge the appetite of souls after some all-sufficient good, that they might be the more unspeakably tortured in the missing of it ; but that they might more certainly return to the Original of their beings. And such busy-working essences as the souls of men are, could neither be made as dull and senseless of true happiness as stocks and stones are, neither could they contain the whole sum and perfection of it within themselves : therefore they must also be informed with such principles as might conduct them back to him from whom they came. God does not make creatures for the mere sport of his almighty arm, to raise and ruin, and turn up and down at pleasure. No ; the good pleasure of that will which made them is the same still ; it changes

not, though we may change, and make ourselves incapable of partaking the blissful effects of it.

And so we come to consider that law embosomed in the souls of men which ties them again to their Creator, and this is called, The law of nature; which indeed is nothing else but a paraphrase or comment upon the nature of God, as it copies forth itself in the soul of man.

Because God is the first mind and the first good, propagating an imitation of himself in such immortal natures as the souls of men are; therefore ought the soul to renounce all mortal things, and preserve its affections chaste and pure for God himself; to love him with an unbounded love; to trust in him, and reverence him; to converse with him in a free and cheerful manner, as one “in whom we live, and move, and have our being;” being perpetually encompassed by him, and never moving out of him; to resign all our ways and wills to him with an equal and indifferent mind, as knowing that he guides and governs all things in the best way.

And because all those scattered rays of beauty and loveliness which we behold spread up and down all the world over, are only the emanations of that inexhausted light which is above; therefore should we love them all in that, and climb up always by those sun-beams unto the eternal Father of lights. We should look upon him, and take from him the pattern of our lives, and always eyeing of him should polish and shape our souls into the clearest resemblance of him; and in all our behaviour in this world, (that great temple of his,) deport ourselves decently and reverently, with that humility, meekness, and modesty, that become his house. We should endeavour, more and more, to be perfect, as he is; in all our dealings with men, doing good, shewing mercy and compassion, advancing justice and righteousness, being always full of charity and good works; and look upon ourselves as having nothing to do here but to display the

glory of our heavenly Father, and frame our hearts and lives according to that pattern which we behold in the mount of a holy contemplation of him. Thus we should endeavour to preserve that heavenly fire of the Divine love and goodness, (which, issuing forth from God, centres itself within us,) always alive and burning in the temple of our souls, and to sacrifice ourselves to him. And when we fulfil this royal law, arising out of the heart of eternity, then we shall here appear to be “the children of God,” as our Saviour speaks, Matt. v

We shall close up this particular with that high privilege which immortal souls are invested with: They are all the offspring of God; so St. Paul allows the heathen poet to call them. They are all royally descended, and have no father but God himself, being originally formed in his image and likeness; and when they express the purity of the Divine life in being perfect, as God is perfect, then they manifest themselves to be his children. And Christ encourageth men to seek and pray for the Spirit, (which is the best gift that God can give to men,) because he is their heavenly Father; much more bountiful and tender to all helpless souls that seek him, than any earthly parent, whose nature is degenerated from that primitive goodness, can be to his children. But those apostate spirits, that know not to return to the Original of their beings, but implant themselves into some other stock, and seek to unite themselves to another line by sin and wickedness, cut themselves off from this Divine privilege, and lose their own birth-right.

But here it may be of use to inquire into the reason of such laws as we call positive, which are not the eternal dictates of the Divine nature communicating itself to immortal spirits, but rather deduce their original from the free will and pleasure of God. The true intent of these positive laws seems to be to secure the eternal law of righteousness from transgression. They were but cautionary and preventive of disobedience to that higher law. We may safely conclude that God gave not those positive

laws merely *pro imperio*, not merely to manifest his absolute dominion and sovereignty, as some think, but for the good of those that were enjoined to obey; and this belief Moses endeavours, almost throughout the whole Book of Deuteronomy, to strengthen the Israelites in: and therefore God was so ready upon all occasions to dispense with these laws, and required the Jews to omit the observance of them, when they might seem to jostle with any other law of moral duty, or human necessity.

For a more distinct unfolding of this point, we may take notice of this difference in the notion of good and evil. Some things are so absolutely, and some only relatively. That which is absolutely good, is every way superior to us, and we ought always to be commanded by it: but that which is relatively good to us, may sometimes be commanded by us. Eternal truth and righteousness are in themselves absolutely good, and the more we conform ourselves to them, the better we are. But those things that are only good relatively, are so much the better, by how much the more they are conformed to us, I mean, by how much the more they are fitted to our condition, and may be means to help us in our pursuit of some higher good. And such is the matter of all positive laws, and the ritual part of religion.

What I have observed concerning the things absolutely good, I conceive to be included in that mentioned Dan. ix. “Everlasting righteousness,” which the prophet there saith should be “brought in” by Messiah. This δικαιοσύνη αἰώνιος, is the righteousness which is of an eternal and immutable nature, as being a conformity with eternal and unchangeable truth. For there is a righteousness which is not thus eternal, but positive, and at the pleasure of God that dictates it. And such was the righteousness which Christ said it became him to fulfil, when he was baptized. But the foundation of this “everlasting righteousness” is something unalterable. To speak more particularly, “That the highest good should be loved in

the highest degree ; that dependent creatures, who borrow all they have from God, should never glory in themselves, or admire themselves, but ever admire and adore that unbounded goodness, which is the source of their beings, and all the good they partake of ; that we should always do that which is just and right, according to the measure we would others should do with us.” These, and some other things, which a rectified reason will easily supply, are immutably true and righteous ; so that it never was, nor can be true, that they are unnecessary. And whoso hath his heart moulded into a delight in such a righteousness, and the practice thereof, hath this eternal righteousness brought into his soul ; which righteousness is also true and real ; not like that imaginary external righteousness of the law, which the pharisees boasted in.

CHAP IX.

The Conclusion of this Treatise concerning the Existence and Nature of God ; shewing how our Knowledge of God comes to be so imperfect in this State.

For the concluding of this discourse, we shall a little consider how inconsistent a thing a perfect knowledge of God is with this state which we are in here. While “we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord ;” as St. Paul speaks, and that, (I think) without a mystery. Such bodies as ours are, being fitted for an animal state, and pieces of this whole machine of sensible matter, are perpetually drawing down our souls, when they should raise up themselves by contemplation of the Deity ; and the caring more or less for the things of this body, so exercises the soul in this state, that it cannot attend upon God without distraction. Such a body as this we carry about us, is the dark den and sepulchre in which souls are imprisoned and entombed ; and Proclus tells us, that the abode of the soul in such a body as this, is, according to

the common vote of antiquity, nothing else but “a dwelling or pitching its tabernacle in the valley of oblivion and death.” But Plotinus, searching more strictly into this business, tells his own and their meaning in plainer terms, that this body is an occasion of evil to the soul two ways ; 1. As it hinders its mental operations, presenting its false images continually to it : 2. as it calls forth its advertency to its own passions, about which while it exerciseth itself, it falls into a sinful inordinacy.

Yet did not the Platonists, or the more contemplative Jews deny the existence of all kind of body in the other state, as if there should be nothing residing there but naked souls totally divested of all corporeal essence ; for they held that the soul should, in the other world, be united with a body, not such an one as it did act in here, but such as should be most agreeable to the soul, which they called “the spiritual vehicle of the soul ;” and by Zoroaster it was called a kind of *umbra*, or aerial mantle, in which the soul wraps herself, which, he said, remained with her in the state of glory.

But to return ; the Platonists have pointed out a three-fold knowledge of God, the last of which they affirmed to be unattainable by us, it being that ineffable light whereby the Divinity comprehends its own essence penetrating all that immensity of being which itself is. That is, that I may phrase it in the Scripture words, “a beholding of God face to face,” which is that *arcanum facierum* the Jewish writers speak of, which we cannot attain to while we continue in this bodily state. And so when Moses desired “to behold the face of God,” that is, as the Jews understand it, that a distinct idea of the Divine essence might be imprinted upon his mind, God told him, “No man can see me and live ;” that is, no man in this corruptible state is capable of attaining to this sight of God, as Maimonides expounds it, “The understanding of the living man, who is compounded of body and soul, is utterly unable clearly to apprehend the Divine essence, to see it as it is.” And so St. Paul distinguisheth

the knowledge of this life as taken into this complex sense, and of *the life to come*: that “ now we see in a glass,” which is continually sullied and darkened, while we look into it, by the breathing of our passions and imaginations upon it : but we shall see “ then face to face.” And in like manner does a Greek philosopher compare these two sorts of knowledge which the soul hath of God in this life and in that to come. “ The soul will reckon all this knowledge of God which we have here but like a fable or parable, when once it is in conjunction with the Father, feasting upon truth itself, and beholding God in the pure rays of his own Divinity.”

A

DISCOURSE,

TREATING OF

The Nature of Prophecy.	is that are frequently, in Scripture, attributed to the Prophets.
The different Degrees of the Prophetic Spirit.	The Schools of the Prophets.
The Difference of Prophetic Dreams from all other Dreams recorded in Scripture.	The Sons, or Disciples of the Prophets.
The Difference of the True Prophetic Spirit from Enthusiastic Imposture.	The Dispositions preparatory to Prophecy.
What the Meaning of those Actions	The Time when the Prophetic Spirit ceased in the Jewish and Christian Churches :

WITH

RULES FOR THE BETTER UNDERSTANDING

PROPHETIC WRIT.

2 PET. i. 21.

“ For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost.”

Philo Jud. Περὶ τοῦ, τίς ο τῷ θεῷ πραγμάτων κληρονομίᾳ.

Προφῆτης ιδίου μὲν ὅδεν αποφθεγγεῖται, ἀλλοτρία δὲ παντα πεπονθεῖται επεξε. φανδω δὲ ο θεός ερμηνεία γενεσθαι θεός, οὐκε κυρίως μοχθηρός ὅδεις εὐθεσία. μονώ δὲ σοφώ ταντ' εφαρμοτίει, επει καὶ μονάς οργάνου θεός εστιν οὐχί, κριθομένου καὶ πληπλομένου αοράτως υπὸ αυτῷ.

OF

PROPHETY.

CHAP. I.

That Prophecy is the Way whereby revealed Truth is dispensed to us. Man's Mind capable of being acquainted as well with revealed as natural Truth. Truths of natural Inscription may be excited in us, and cleared to us, by means of prophetical Influence. That the Scripture frequently accommodates itself to vulgar Apprehension.

HAVING spoken to those principles of natural theology which have the most proper influence on life and practice, we come now to consider those revealed truths which tend most to cherish real piety. But before we fall into any strict inquiry concerning them, it may not be amiss to examine “How this kind of truth, which depends solely upon the free will of God, is manifested to mankind;” and so treat a little concerning prophecy, the only way whereby this kind of truth can be dispensed to us. For though our own reason and understanding carry all natural truth necessary for practice, engraven upon themselves, and folded up in their own essences: yet positive truth can only be made known to us by a free influx of the Divine mind upon our minds and understandings. And as it ariseth out of nothing else but the free pleasure of the Divinity, so, without any natural determination it freely shines, upon the souls of

men where and when it listeth, hiding its light from them, or displaying it upon them, as it pleaseth.

Yet the souls of men are as capable of conversing with it, as with any sensible and external objects. And as our sensations carry the notions of material things to our understandings, which before were unacquainted with them ; so there is a way whereby the knowledge of Divine truth may also be revealed to us. God having so contrived the nature of our souls, that we may converse one with another, and inform one another of things we knew not before, would not make us so deaf to his voice that breaks the rocks, and rends the mountains ; he would not make us so undisciplinable in Divine things, as that we should not be capable of receiving any impressions from himself of those things which we were before unacquainted with. And this way of communicating truth to the souls of men is originally nothing else but prophetical or enthusiastical ; and so we may take notice of the general nature of prophecy.

I would not be mistaken, as if I thought no natural truth might by prophetic influence be awakened within us, and cleared up to us, for indeed one main end of the prophetical spirit seems to have been the quickening our minds to a more lively converse with those eternal truths of reason, which commonly lie buried in so much fleshly obscurity within us, that we discern them not. And therefore the Scripture treats not only of those truths which are the results of God's free counsels, but also of those which are most allied to our own understandings, and that in the greatest way of condescension that may be, speaking to the weakest sort of men in the most vulgar dialect.

Divine truth hath its humiliation as well as exaltation. Divine truth becomes many times in Scripture incarnate, debasing itself to assume our rude conceptions, that so it might converse more freely with us, and infuse its own Divinity into us. God having been so pleased herein to manifest himself not more jealous of his own glory, than

zealous of our good. "Nos non habemus aures, sicut Deus habet linguam." If he should speak in the language of eternity, who could understand him, or interpret his meaning? Or if he should have declared his truth to us only in a way of the purest abstraction that human souls are capable of, how should then the more rude and illiterate sort of men have been able to apprehend it? Truth is content, when it comes into the world, to wear our mantles, to learn our language, to conform itself as it were to our dress and fashions. It affects not state, but becomes all things to all men, as every son of truth should do, for their good. Which was well observed in that old axiom among the Jews, "Lumen supernum nunquam descendit sine indumento." And therefore the best way to understand the true sense of the Scripture is not rigidly to examine it upon philosophical interrogatories, or to bring it under the scrutiny of school-definitions and distinctions. It speaks not to us so much in the tongue of the learned, as in the plainest and most vulgar dialect. Which the Jews constantly observed, and therefore it was a common rule among them for a true understanding of the Scripture, the law speaks with the tongue of the sons of men. And therefore we find almost all corporeal properties attributed to God in Scripture. But such of them as sound imperfection in vulgar ears, as eating, drinking, and the like, these the Scripture no where attributes to him. The reason of this plain style of Scripture may be worth our farther taking notice of, as it is laid down by Maimonides. "For this reason the law speaks according to the language of the sons of men, because it is the most easy way of teaching children, women, and common people, who have not ability to apprehend things according to the very nature and essence of them."

The Scripture was not written only for sagacious and abstracted minds, or philosophical heads; for then how few are there that should have been taught the true knowledge

of God thereby ! We must not think that it always gives us formal definitions of things, for it speaks commonly according to vulgar apprehension : as when it tells of “ the ends of the heaven,” which now almost every idiot knows hath no ends at all. So when it tells us, Gen. ii. 7, that “ God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul ;” the expression seems to comply with that vulgar conceit, that the soul of man is a kind of vital breath or air : and yet the immortality thereof is evidently insinuated in setting forth a double original of the two parts of man, his body and his soul ; the one of which is brought in as arising out of the dust of the earth, the other as proceeding from the breath of God himself.

So we find vulgar expressions concerning God himself, besides those which attribute sensation and motion to him, as when he is set forth as “ riding upon the wings of the wind, riding upon the clouds, sitting in heaven,” and the like, which seem to determine his omnipresence to some particular place. Whereas, indeed, such passages can be fetched from nothing else but those apprehensions which the generality of men have of God, as being most there, from whence the objects of dread and admiration most insinuate themselves into their senses, as they do from the air, clouds, winds, or heaven. So again, when the Scripture would insinuate God’s seriousness and reality in any thing, it brings him in as ordering it a great while ago before the foundation of the world was laid, as if he more regarded that than the building of the world.

I might instance in many more things of this nature, but I shall leave this argument, and now come to consider the nature of prophecy, by which God flows in upon the minds of men extrinsically to their own operations, and conveys truth immediately from himself into them.

CHAP. II.

That the Prophetic Spirit did not always manifest itself with the same Clearness and Evidence. Of the four Degrees of Prophecy. The Difference between a Vision and a Dream.

But before we do this, we shall briefly premise something concerning that gradual variety whereby these Divine enthusiasms were discovered to the prophets of old. The prophetical Spirit did not always manifest itself with the same clearness and evidence: but sometimes that light was more strong and vivid, sometimes more wan and obscure. So we find an evident difference of prophetic illumination asserted in Scripture between Moses and the rest of the prophets, Deut. xxxiv. 10. “And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face:” which words have a manifest reference to that which God himself in a more open way declared concerning Moses, upon occasion of some arrogant speeches of Aaron and Miriam, who would equal their own degree of prophecy to that of Moses. Num. xii. 5—8, “And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forth. And he said, Hear my words; if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream: my servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold. Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” In which words that degree of Divine illumination, whereby God made himself known to Moses, is set forth as transcendant to the prophetical illumination: and so the phrase of the New

Testament is wont to distinguish between Moses and the prophets, as if Moses had been greater than any prophet.

Having briefly premised this, we shall first inquire into the nature of that which is peculiarly amongst the Jews called prophetical. And this is thus defined to us by Maimonides in *Par. 2, c. 36*, of his *More Nevochim*, “The true essence of prophecy is nothing else but an influence from the Deity upon the rational first, and afterwards the imaginative faculty.” Which definition belongs to prophecy, distinguished by Maimonides, both from that degree of Divine illumination which was above it, which the masters constantly attribute to Moses, and from that other degree inferior to it.

But Rabbi Joseph Albo in *Maam. 3, c 8, De fundamentis fidei*, hath given us a more large description, “Prophecy is an influence from God upon the rational faculty, either by the mediation of the fancy or otherwise. And this influence, whether by the ministry of an angel or otherwise, makes a man to know such things as by his natural abilities he could not attain to the knowledge of.”

The main thing we shall observe in this description is, that power of the soul upon which these extraordinary impressions of Divine influence are made; which, in all proper prophecy, is both the rational and imaginative power. For in this case they supposed the imaginative power to be set forth as a stage upon which certain things were represented to their understandings, just as they are in dreams; only that the understandings of the prophets were always kept awake and strongly acted by God in the midst of these apparitions, to see the intelligible mysteries in them, and so in these types and shadows, to behold the antitypes. But in case the imagination be not thus set forth as the scene of prophetic illumination, but the impressions of things nakedly without any schemes or pictures be made immediately upon the understanding itself, then is it reckoned to be the Mosaic degree, wherein God speaks as it were face to face.

Accordingly R. Albo hath distinguished prophecy into these four degrees. The first and lowest of all is, when the imaginative power is most predominant, so that the impressions made upon it are too busy, and the scene becomes too turbulent for the rational faculty to discern the mystical sense of them clearly ; and in this case the enthusiasms spend themselves extremely in parables, similitudes, and allegories, in a dark and obscure manner, as is manifest in Zechariah and many of Ezekiel's prophecies.

This declining state of prophecy the Jews supposed then principally to have been, and this Divine illumination to have been then setting in the Jewish church when they were carried captive into Babylon. Thus, according to the general opinion of the Jewish masters, after the captivity, in the twilight of prophecy, Ezekiel began to speak altogether in riddles and parables ; and so he himself complains to God, " Ah, Lord God, they say of me, Doth he not speak parables ? "

The second degree of prophecy is, when the strength of the imaginative and rational powers equally balance one another.

The third is, when the rational power is most predominant ; in which case the mind of the prophet is able to strip those things that are represented to it in the glass of fancy of their sensible nature, and apprehend them distinctly in their own naked essence.

The last and highest is the Mosaic degree, in which all imagination ceaseth, and the representation of truth descends not so low as the imagination, but is made in the highest stage of understanding.

Seeing then generally all prophecy lies in the joint impressions and operations of both these faculties, the Jews were wont to understand that place, Num. xii. 6, &c. as generally decyphering that degree of prophecy by which God would discover himself to all those prophets that ever should arise up amongst them, or ever had been, except Moses and the Messiah. And there are only these

two ways declared whereby God would reveal himself to every other prophet, either in a vision or a dream.

The difference of these two, a dream and a vision, seems rather to lie in circumstantial than in any thing essential; in a dream a voice was frequently heard, which was not usual in a vision. But the representation of Divine things by some sensible images must needs be in both. Yet the Jews make a vision superior to a dream, as representing things more to the life, which indeed seizeth upon the prophet while he is awake, but it no sooner surpriseth him than all his external senses are bound; and so it often declines into a true dream, as appears by the example of Abraham, Gen. xv. 12, where the vision in which God had appeared to him, (as it is related ver. 1,) passed into a sleep. "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham, and lo an horror of great darkness fell upon him." Which words seem to be nothing else but a description of that passage which he had by sleep out of his vision into a dream.

CHAP. III.

How the Prophetic Dreams differed from all other.

We have now taken a general survey of the nature of prophecy, which is always attended (as we have shewed) with a vision or a dream, though indeed there is no dream properly without a vision. And here before we pass from hence, it will be necessary to take notice of a main distinction the Hebrew doctors make, lest we mistake all those dreams which we meet with in Scripture for prophetical, whereas many of them were not such. For though they were all sent by God, yet many were sent as monitions and instructions, and had not the true force of prophetical dreams in them; and so they are wont commonly to distinguish, "When it is said in Holy Writ,

that God came to such a man in a dream of the night, that cannot be called a prophecy, nor such a man a prophet; for the meaning is no more than this, that some admonition or instruction was given by God to such a man, and that it was in a dream." Of this sort he and the rest of the Hebrew writers hold those dreams to be which were sent to Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Abimlech, and Laban.

But the main difference between these two sorts of dreams seems to consist in this, that such as were not prophetical were much weaker in their energy upon the imagination than the other were, so that they wanted the force of a Divine evidence, to give a plenary as- of their Divine original; as we see in those dreams of surance Solomon, 1 Kings iii. 5, 15, and chap. ix. 2, where it is said " Solomon awoke, and behold it was a dream :" as if he had not been effectually confirmed from the energy of the dream itself, that it was a true prophetical influx.

But there is yet another difference they are wont to make between them, which is, that these monitory dreams ordinarily contained in them something that was void of reality: as in that dream of Joseph concerning " the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowing down to him ;" whereas his mother, which should there have been signified by the moon, was dead and buried before, and so incapable of performing that respect to him which the other at last did.

The general difference between prophetical dreams and those that are merely monitory, and all else which we find recorded in Scripture, Philo Judæus hath at large laid down. The proper character of those that were prophetical he clearly insinuates to be that ecstastical rapture whereby in all prophetical dreams, God, acting upon the mind and imagination of the prophets, snatched them from themselves, and so left more potent and evident impressions upon them.

CHAP. IV.

A large Account of the Difference between the true prophetic Spirit, and enthusiastic Impostures. An Account of those Fears and Consternations which often seized upon the Prophets. How the Prophets perceived when the prophetic Influx seized upon them. The different Evidence and Energy of the true and false prophetic Spirit.

From what we have formerly discoursed concerning the stage of imagination upon which those things presented themselves to the mind of the prophet, it may be easily apprehended how easy it might be for the devil's prophets to counterfeit the true prophets of God. For indeed herein the prophetic influx seems to agree with a mistaken enthusiasm, that both of them make strong impressions upon the imagination.

It will not be therefore any great digression here, "to examine the nature of this false light which pretends to prophecy, but is not;" as being seated only in the imaginative power, from whence the first occasion of this delusion ariseth, seeing that power is also the seat of all prophetical vision. For this purpose it will not be amiss to premise that three-fold degree of influence pointed out by Maimonides. The first is wholly intellectual, descending only into the rational faculty, by which that is extremely strengthened in the distinct apprehension of truth. The second is jointly into the rational and imaginative faculty. The third into the imagination only.

We shall copy out of him a character of some of this third sort, the rather because it so exactly delineates many enthusiastic impostors of our age. His words are these, "There are some of this third sort who have sometimes such strange fancies, dreams, and ecstasies, that they take themselves for prophets. And hence it is that they fall into great confusions in many matters of no

small moment, and so mix true notions with imaginary, as if heaven and earth were jumbled together. All which proceeds from the too great force of the imagination, and the imbecility of reason." This delusion then in his sense, ariseth from hence, that all this foreign force that is upon them serves only to impregnate their imaginations, but does not inform their reasons ; and therefore they can so easily embrace things absurd to all true and sober reason : whereas the prophetical spirit acting principally upon the reason of the prophets, guided them consistently and intelligibly into the understanding of things.

From what hath been said ariseth one main distinction between the prophetical and pseudo-prophetical spirit, viz. That the prophetical Spirit doth never alienate the mind, but always maintains a consistency and clearness of reason, strength, and solidity of judgment, where it comes ; it doth not ravish the mind, but inform and enlighten it. But the pseudo-prophetical spirit, if it enters into any, because it can rise no higher in man than his fancy, there dwells as in storms and tempests, and is conjoined with alienation of mind. For whensoever the phantasms come to be disordered and presented tumultuously to the soul, as it is in a fury, or melancholy, or else by the energy of this spirit of divination, the mind can pass no true judgment upon them ; but its light and influence become eclipsed. Thus the Pythian prophetess is described by Lucian, lib. 3, as filled with inward fury, while she was inspired by the fatidical spirit, and uttering her oracles in a strange disguise, with many antic gestures, her hair torn, and foaming at the mouth. As also Cassandra is brought in prophesying in the like manner by Lycophron.

Chrysostom hath very fully and excellently laid down this difference between the true and false prophets, *Hom. 29*, on the first epistle to the Corinthians. " It is the property of a diviner to be ecstastical, to undergo some violence, to be tossed and hurried about like a madman : but it is otherwise with a prophet, whose understanding

is awake, and his mind in a sober and orderly temper, and he knows every thing he saith.

But here we must not mistake, as if there were nothing but the most absolute clearness and serenity of thoughts in the soul of the prophet amidst all his visions. And therefore we shall take notice of that observation of the Jews, concerning those panic fears, consternations, and tremblings, which frequently seized upon them together with the prophetical influx. And indeed by how much stronger and more vehement those impressions were which were made upon their imagination, by so much the greater was this perturbation and trouble: and the more the prophet's imagination was exercised, the more were his natural strength and spirits exhausted. Therefore Daniel being wearied with the toilsome work of his fancy about those visions that were presented to him, chap. x. 8, &c. complains that "there was no strength left in him; that his comeliness was turned into corruption, and he retained no strength;" that "when he heard the voice, he was in a deep sleep, and his face toward the ground;" that "his sorrows were turned upon him, and no breath was left in him." So Gen. xv. 12, when the vision presented to Abraham passed into a prophetical dream, it is said, "A deep sleep fell upon Abraham, and a horror of great darkness fell upon him."

From this notion, perhaps, we may borrow some light for the clearing of Jeremiah xxiii. 9, "All my bones shake: I am like a drunken man, (and like a man whom wine hath overcome,) because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness." The energy of prophetical vision wrought thus potently upon his animal part. And thus I suppose is also that passage in Ezekiel iii. 14, to be expounded, where the prophet describes the energy which the prophetical Spirit had over him, when, in a prophetical vision, he was carried to those of the captivity that dwelt by the river Chebar: "The Spirit of the Lord lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, and in the heat (or hot chafing and anger,)

of my spirit ; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me." So Habak. iii. 2, "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid ;" that is, the prophetical voice heard by him, and represented in his imagination, was so strong that it struck a panic fear into him. And it may be, the same thing is meant Isaiah xxi. 3, where the prophet describes that inward conturbation and consternation that his vision of Babylon's ruin was accompanied with. "Therefore are my loins filled with pain, pangs have taken hold upon me as the pangs of a woman that travailleth : I was bowed down at the hearing of it, I was dismayed at the seeing of it."

But how did the prophets perceive when the prophetical inspiration first seized upon them ? There may be such dreams and visions which are merely delusive, and such as the false prophets were often partakers of ; and the true prophets might have often such dreams as were merely true dreams, but not prophetical.

The Hebrew masters here tell us, that in the beginning of prophetical inspiration, the prophets used to have some apparition, or image of a man or angel, presenting itself to their imagination. Sometimes it began with a voice, and that either strong and vehement, or else soft and familiar. And so God is said first of all to appear to Samuel, 1 Sam. iii. 7, who is said not yet to have known the Lord ; that is, as Maimonides expounds it, *Ignoravit adhuc tunc temporis Deum hoc modo cum prophetis loqui solere*. He knew not the manner of that voice by which the prophetic Spirit was wont to awaken the attention of the prophets.

Those impressions, by which the prophets were made partakers of Divine inspiration, carried a strong evidence of their Original with them, whereby they might be able to distinguish them from any mistake, as also from their own true dreams, which might be sent by God, but not prophetical ; which yet I think is more universally unfolded, Jeremiah xxviii. where the difference between true Divine inspiration and such false dreams and visions as

sometimes a lying spirit breathed into the false prophets, is on set purpose described to us from their different evidence and energy. The pseudo-prophetical spirit being but chaff, as vain as vanity itself, subject to every wind : the matter itself which was suggested tending to nourish immorality and profaneness ; and besides for the manner of inspiration, it was more dilute and languid. Whereas true prophecy entered upon the mind “as a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces :” and therefore the true prophets might know themselves to have received command from heaven, when the false might, if they would have laid aside their own fond self-conceit, have known as easily that God sent them not. So Maimonides : “All prophecy makes itself known to the prophet that it is prophecy indeed.” Which Abarbanel explains thus, “A prophet, when he is asleep, may distinguish between a prophetical dream and that which is not such, by the vigour and liveliness of the perception whereby he apprehends the things propounded, or else by the weakness thereof.” And this he concludes to be the true meaning of Jer. xxiii. 29, “Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces ?” Which he thus glosses upon : “Such a thing is the prophetical spirit, by reason of the strength of its impression and the forcibleness of its operation upon the heart of the prophet ; it is even like a thing that burns and tears him. And this happens to him either amidst the dream itself, or afterwards when he is fully awake. But those dreams which are not prophetical, although they be true, are weak and languid things, easily blasted as it were with the East wind.” We have yet another evident demonstration of this notion which may not be omitted, which is Jer. xx. 9, “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name : but his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up within my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.” And, ver. 11, “The Lord is with me as a mighty terrible One.”

CHAP. V.

That these Representations were generally made in the Prophet's Fancy by some Angel.

Before I conclude this discourse of prophecy, properly so called, I think it may be useful to treat a little of two things more that commonly are considered in this degree of Divine inspiration. First, "Who was the immediate efficient that represented the prophetical visions to the fancy of the prophets." Secondly, "What those actions were that are frequently attributed to the prophets, whether they were real, or only imaginary."

I shall first inquire, "By whom these representations were made in the prophet's imagination." For though there be no question but that it was God himself by whom the whole frame of prophecy was disposed, seeing the scope thereof was to reveal his will; yet the immediate efficient seems not to be God himself, but an angel: so all the Jewish writers determine. Maimonides's sense is full for this purpose.

The first scripture which he brings for the confirmation of it, is that of Gen. xviii. 1. But that which is more for his purpose is Gen. xxxii. 24, where "Jacob wrestled all night with the angel," for so that man was, as Hosea tells us; and ver. 1, "The angels of God met Jacob." Neither doth his interpretation of this wrestling to have been only in a prophetical vision, at all prejudice the historical truth of that event of it, which was Jacob's halting upon his thigh. Another place is Josh. v. 13, "Joshua lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold a man stood over-against him." Again, Judg. v. 23, Deborah attributes the command she had to curse Meroz to an angel. "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord." In the first book of Kings, ch. xix. ver. 11, 12, we have a large description of this imaginary appearance of angels in the several modes of it; "Behold the Lord

passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; but the Lord was not in the wind : and after the wind an earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire," &c. All which appearances Jonathan the Targumist expounds by armies of angels, which were attended with those terrible phenomena. And the still voice in which the Lord was, he renders answerable to the rest, by "the voice of angels praising God in a gentle kind of harmony." For though it be there said that the Lord was in the soft voice, yet that paraphrast seems to understand it only of his ambassador. Which in other places of Scripture is manifest ; as in 2 Kings i. 3, 15, 16, where ver. 3, we find the angel delivered to Elijah the message to Ahaziah, king of Israel, who sent to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to inquire about his disease ; " But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub." And ver. 16, we have all this message attributed to God himself by the prophet, as if he had received the dictate immediately from God himself. And in Daniel, the Apocalypse, and Zachariah, we find all things perpetually represented and interpreted by angels. In the general, that the prophetic scene was perpetually ordered by some angel, I think is evident from what hath been already said ; which I might further confirm from Ezekiel, all whose prophecies about the temple are expressly attributed to a man as the actor of them, that is indeed an angel ; for so they used constantly to appear to the prophets in an human shape.

We might add to all this those visions which we meet with in the New Testament, which, as a thing vulgarly known, were attributed to angels. So Acts xxvii. 23, " There stood by me the angel of God this night ;" that is, in a prophetic dream. And Acts xii. when the angel of God did really appear to Peter, and bring him out of prison, he could scarcely be persuaded of a long time but

that all this was a vision, this being the common manner of all prophetical visions. And Acts xxiii. when the pharisees would describe St. Paul as a prophet that had received some vision or revelation from heaven, they phrase it by “the speaking of an angel or spirit unto him,” ver. 9. “We find no evil in this man; but if an angel or spirit hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.”

CHAP. VI.

Whether those Actions that are frequently attributed to the Prophets were real, or only imaginary. What we are to think of several Actions recorded of Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, in their Prophecies.

There are many times in the midst of prophetical narrations some things related to be done by the prophets themselves upon the command of the prophetic voice, which have been generally conceived to have been acted really, the grossest of all not excepted, as Hosea's taking a harlot for his wife and begetting children. But we shall not here doubt to conclude both of that and all other actions of the prophets which they were enjoined upon the stage of prophecy, that they were only scenical and imaginary; except indeed they were such as of their own nature must have an historical meaning. For this purpose it may be worth while to take notice of what Maimonides hath determined in this case, *More Nev. Part 2, cap. 46*, “Know therefore, that as it is in a dream, a man thinks he hath been in this or that country, that he has married a wife there, and continued there for some time, that by this wife he has had a son of such a name, such a disposition, and the like: so it is with the prophetical parables as to what the prophets see or do in a prophetical vision. For whatsoever those parables inform us concerning any action the prophet doth, or concerning the space of time

between one action and another, or going from one place to another ; all this is in a prophetical vision. Neither are these actions real, although some particularities may be precisely reckoned in the writings of the prophets. For because it was well known that it was all done in a prophetical vision ; it was not necessary in rehearsing every particularity to reiterate that it was in a prophetical vision ; as it was also needless to inculcate that it was in a dream. But the vulgar think all such actions were really performed, and not in a prophetical vision. And therefore I have an intention to make plain this business, and shall bring such things as no man shall be able to doubt of ; adding thereunto some examples by which you may be able to judge of the rest, which I shall not for the present mention.” Thus we see how Maimonides counts it a vulgar error to conceive that those actions which are commonly attributed to the prophets in the current of their prophecy, their travelling from place to place, their propounding questions, and receiving answers, &c. were real things, whereas they were only imaginary.

For a more distinct understanding of this, we must remember, That the prophetical scene or stage upon which all apparitions were made to the prophet, was his imagination ; and that there all those things which God would have revealed unto him were acted over symbolically, as in a mask, in which divers persons are brought in, amongst which the prophet himself bears a part. And therefore he, according to the exigency of this dramatical apparatus, must, as the other actors, perform his part, sometimes by speaking and reciting things done, sometimes by acting that part which he was appointed to act by some others ; and so not only by speaking, but by gestures and actions comes in in his due place among the rest. And therefore it is no wonder to hear of those things done, which indeed have no historical or real variety ; the scope of all being to represent something strongly to the prophet’s understanding, and sufficiently to inform it in the substance of those things which he was

to instruct that people in, to whom he was sent. And so sometimes we have only the intelligible matter of prophecies delivered to us nakedly without the imaginary ceremonies or solemnities. And as this notion of those actions of the prophet that are interwoven with their prophecies is most genuine and agreeable to the genuine nature of prophecy, so we shall further clear and confirm it in some particulars.

We shall begin with that of Hosea's marrying Gomer, a common harlot, and taking to himself children of whoredoms, which he is said to do a first and second time, chap. i. and chap. iii. Which kind of action, however it might be void of vice, yet it would not have been void of offence, for a prophet to have thus unequally yoked himself (to use St. Paul's expression) with any such infamous persons, if it had been done really.

And therefore in these recitals of prophetical visions, we find many things less coherent than can agree with a true history ; as in the narrative of Abraham's vision, Gen. xv. (for the Rabbins expound that whole chapter to be nothing else) we find, ver. 1, that God appeared to Abraham in a vision, and ver. 5, God brings him into a field, as if it were after the shutting up of the evening, and shews him the stars of heaven : and yet for all this, ver. 12, it was yet day-time, and the sun not gone down : " And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham ; " and ver. 17, " And it came to pass that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and burning lamp that passed between those pieces." From whence it is manifest that Abraham's going out into the field before, to take a view of the stars of heaven, and his ordering of those several living creatures, ver. 9, 10, for a sacrifice, was all performed in a prophetical vision. It being no strange thing to have incoherent junctures of time made in such a way.

So Jeremiah xiii. we have a very precise narrative of Jeremiah's getting a linen girdle, and putting it upon his loins ; and after a while he must needs take a long journey

to Euphrates, to hide it there in a hole of the rock ; and then returning, after many days, makes another weary journey to the same place to take it out again after it was all corrupted : all which could manifestly be nothing else but merely imaginary ; the scope thereof being to imprint this more deeply upon the understanding of the prophet, that the house of Judah and Israel, which was so nearly knit and united to God, should be destroyed.

The same prophet, chap. xviii. is brought in going to the house of a potter, to take notice how he wrought a piece of work upon the wheel ; and when the vessel he intended was all marred, then he made of his clay another vessel. And chap. xix. he is brought in as taking the ancients of the people, and the ancients of the priests along with him into the valley of the son of Hinnom, with a potter's earthen bottle under his arm, and there breaking it in pieces in the midst of them.

In this last chapter it is very observable how the scheme of speech is altered, when the prophet relates a real history concerning himself, ver. 14, speaking of himself in the third person, as if now he were to speak of somebody else, and not of a prophet or his actions ; for so we read, ver. 14, "Then came Jeremiah from Tophet," &c.

But other times we meet with things described with all the circumstantial pomp of the business, when yet it could be nothing else but a dramatical thing ; as ch. xxxv. where the prophet goes and finds out the chief of the Rechabites, and brings them into such a particular chamber, and there sets pots and cups full of wine before them, and bids them drink wine. Just in the same mode with this we have another story told, chap. xxv. 15, and 17, &c. of his taking a wine-cup from God, and carrying it up and down to all nations far and near, Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and the kings and princes thereof ; to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, princes, people ; to all the Arabians, and kings of the land of Uz ; to the kings of the land of the Philistines, Edom, Moab, Ammon ; the kings of Tyre and Sidon, and of the isles

beyond the sea, Dedan, Tema, Buz ; the kings of Zimri, of the Medes and Persians, and all the kings of the north : and all these he said he made to drink of this cup. And in this fashion, chap. xxvii. he is sent up and down with yokes, to put upon the necks of several kings : all which can have no other sense than that which is merely imaginary, though we be not told that all this was acted only in a vision, for the nature of the thing would not permit any real performance thereof.

The like we must say of Ezekiel's eating a roll given him of God, chap. iii. And chap. iv. it is especially remarkable how ceremoniously all things are related concerning his taking a tile, and portraying the city of Jerusalem upon it, his laying siege to it ; all which will be evident to have been merely dramatical, if we carefully examine all things in it. For he is here commanded to lie continually before a tile 390 days, which is full 13 months, upon his left side, and after that 40 more upon his right, and to bake his bread that he should eat all this while with dung.

So, chap. v. he is commanded to take a barber's razor, and to shave his head and beard, then to weigh his hair in a pair of scales, and divide it into three parts ; and after the days of his siege should be fulfilled, spoken of before, then to burn a third part of it in the midst of the city, and to smite about the other third with a knife, and to scatter the other third to the wind. All which, as it is most unlikely in itself ever to have been really done, so was it against the law of the priests. But that Ezekiel himself was a priest, is manifest from chap. i. ver. 3. Upon these passages of Ezekiel, Maimonides hath thus soberly given his judgment : " Far be it from God to render his prophets like to fools and drunken men, and to prescribe them the actions of fools and madmen : besides that, this last injunction would have been inconsistent with the law ; for Ezekiel was a great priest, and therefore obliged to the observation of those two negative precepts, viz. of not shaving the corners of his head and the corners

of his beard : and therefore this was done only in a prophetical vision.” The same sentence likewise he passeth upon that story of Isaiah, chap. xx. 3, his walking naked and barefoot, wherein Isaiah was no otherwise a sign to Egypt and Ethiopia, or rather Arabia, where he dwelt not, and so could not more literally be a type herein, than Ezekiel was here to the Jews.

Again, chap. xii. we read of Ezekiel’s removing his household stuff in the night, as a type of the captivity, and of his digging with his hands through the wall of his house, and of the people’s coming to take notice of this strange action, with many other uncouth ceremonies of the whole business which carry no shew of probability. And yet, ver. 6, God declares upon this to him, “ I have set thee for a sign to the house of Israel ;” and ver. 9, “ Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou ? ” As if all this had been done really ;* which indeed seems to be nothing but a prophetic scene. Neither was the prophet any



* Notwithstanding what our author has advanced in this chapter, to shew that the things which the prophets are represented as having performed at God’s command, were only intended to be done, and only were done in prophetic visions ; yet many learned commentators have been of opinion that some of them, at least, were real transactions ; such as Jeremiah’s going down to the potter’s house, and observing the proceedings of the potters ; his bringing the chief of the Rechabites into a chamber of the temple, and setting wine before them : Ezekiel’s taking a tile and portraying upon it the city of Jerusalem, and an army laying siege to it ; his digging through the wall of his house, and removing his household stuff in the night, and the people’s coming and observing it. And they do not see how the prophets could have been signs to the people, if this had not been the case, or how any thing could have been a sign to them of which they were not eye-witnesses. Some of the actions, however, commanded to be done, such as the prophet’s taking a wine-cup from God, and carrying it to all the nations near, and his making bonds and yokes, and sending them by messengers to be put upon the necks of several kings, could only be done in visions.

real sign, but only imaginary, as having the type of all those fates symbolically represented in his fancy which were to befall the Jews.

But we shall proceed no farther in this argument, which I hope is by this time sufficiently cleared, that we are not in any prophetic narratives of this kind to understand any thing else but the history of the visions themselves which appeared to them, except we be led by some farther argument to determine it to have been any sensible thing.

CHAP VII.

Of that Degree of Divine Inspiration properly called Ruach hakkodesh, i. e. The Holy Spirit. The Nature of it described out of the Jewish Antiquities. Of the Urim and Thummim.

Thus we have done with that part of Divine inspiration which was properly by the Jews called prophecy. We shall now search a little into that which is hagiographical, or as they call it, “The Dictate of the Holy Spirit;” in which the book of Psalms, Job, the works of Solomon, and others, are comprised. This we find thus defined by Maimonides, “When a man perceives some power to arise within him, and rest upon him, which urgeth him to speak, so that he utters psalms or hymns, or profitable and wholesome rules of good living, or matters political and civil, or such as are Divine; and that whilst he is waking and hath the ordinary use of his senses; this is such a one as speaks by the Holy Spirit.” In like manner we find this degree of inspiration described by R. Albo, *Maam. 3, c. 10.* “Now to explain to you what is that other door of Divine influx, through which none can enter by his own natural ability; it is when a man utters words of wisdom, or song, and Divine praise, in pure and elegant language: so that every one that knows him

admires him for this excellent knowledge and composure of words ; but yet he himself knows not from whence this faculty came to him, but is as a child that learns a tongue, and knows not from whence he had this faculty. Now the excellence of this degree of Divine inspiration is well known to all, for it is the same with that which is called the Holy Spirit.”

This kind therefore of Divine inspiration was always more pacate and serene than the other of prophecy, neither did it so much fatigue the imagination. For though these Hagiographi, or holy writers, ordinarily expressed themselves in parables and similitudes, yet they seem only to have made use of such language to set off their sense of Divine things the more advantageously. And seeing there was no labour of the imagination in this way of revelation, therefore it was not communicated to them by any dreams or visions, but while they were waking, and their senses were in their full vigour, their minds calm.

This kind of inspiration, as it always acted pious souls into strains of devotion, or moved them strongly to dictate matters of true goodness, did manifest itself to be of a Divine nature. And as it came in abruptly upon the minds of those holy men without courting their private thoughts, but transported them from that temper of mind they were in before, so that they perceived themselves captivated by the power of some higher light than that which their own understanding poured upon them, they might know it to be more immediately from God.

Indeed that seems to be the main thing wherein this Holy Spirit differed from that constant spirit and frame of holiness dwelling in hallowed minds, that it was too quick, potent, and transporting a thing, and was a kind of vital form to that light of Divine reason which they were perpetually possessed of. And therefore sometimes it runs out into a prediction of things to come, though it may be those previsions were less understood by the prophet himself ; as (if it were needful) we might instance in some of

David's prophecies, which seem to have been revealed to him not so much for himself (as the apostle speaks) as for us.

But we are here to consider this Holy Spirit more strictly, and as we have formerly defined it out of Jewish antiquity. And here we shall first shew what books of the Old Testament were ascribed to this by the Jews. The Old Testament was by the Jews divided into the law, the prophets, and the Holy Writings. And this division is insinuated in Luke xxiv. 44, " And Jesus said unto them, These are the words that I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written concerning me in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms :" where, by the Psalms, seem to be meant the Hagiographa ; for the writers of these Hagiographa might be termed Psalmologists, for some reasons which we shall touch upon hereafter in this discourse.—But to return ; the Old Testament being anciently divided into these parts, it may not be amiss to consider the order of these parts as it is laid down by the talmudical doctors. " Our doctors have delivered unto us this order of the prophets, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve prophets, the first of which is Hosea." They go on to lay down the order of the *αγιογραφα* thus ; Ruth, the book of Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, the Chronicles : and these the Jews did ascribe to the *Ruach hakkodesh*. But why Daniel should not be reckoned among the prophets, I can see no reason, seeing the strain of it wholly argues the nature of a prophetical degree spending itself in dreams and visions, though these were joined with more obscurity than in the other prophets. I think it to have been first of all some fortuitous thing which gave an occasion to this mistake.

But besides those books mentioned, there were some things among the Jews usually attributed to this spirit. And so Maimonides tells us that Eldad and Medad,

and all the high priests who asked counsel by Urim and Thummim, spake by the Holy Spirit, whereby they gave judicial answers, by looking upon the stones of the high priest's breast-plate, to those that came to inquire of God by them. It will not be amiss to shew what this Urim and Thummim was : and we may take it from the best of the Jewish writers. It was done in this manner : the high priest stood before the ark, and he that came to inquire of the Urim and Thummim stood behind him, inquiring with a submissive voice, as if he had been at his private prayers, "Shall I do so, or so?" Then the high priest looked upon the letters which were engraven upon the stones of the breast-plate, and by the concurrence of a spirit of divination, with some modes whereby those letters appeared, he shaped out his answer. But for those that were allowed to inquire at this oracle, they were none else but either the king or the whole congregation.

We must farther know that the Jews were wont to impute to the Holy Spirit all those psalms or songs which we any where meet with in the Old Testament. So Abarbanel: "Every song that is found in the writings of the prophets, was ordered or dictated by the penmen themselves, together with the superintendency of the Holy Spirit: forasmuch as they received them not in the higher way which is called prophecy, as all visions were received, for all visions were perfect prophecy." The author goes on further to declare the common opinion, concerning any such song, that it was not the proper work of God himself, but the work of the prophet's own spirit. Yet we must suppose the prophet's spirit was enabled by the conjunction of Divine help with it, as he puts in the caution, "the Spirit of God and his Divine assistance did still cleave unto the prophet, and was present with him." For, as he tells us, the prophets, being so much accustomed to Divine visions, might be able sometimes, without any prophetical vision, to speak excellently by the Holy Ghost, with very elegant language, and ad-

mirable similitudes. So all those Psalms, which are supposed to have been composed by David, are perpetually ascribed unto him, and the rest of them that were composed by others are, in like manner, ascribed unto them ; whereas the prophetic strain is very different, always intitling God to it, and so is brought in with such kind of prologues, [*The Word of the Lord,*] or [*The Hand of the Lord.*]

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Dispositions antecedent and preparatory to Prophecy. What is meant by Saul's evil Spirit.

OUR next business is to discourse of those several qualifications that were to render a man fit for the spirit of prophecy.

The qualifications which the Jewish doctors supposed necessarily antecedent, were true probity and piety ; and this was the constant opinion of all of them, not excluding the vulgar themselves. Thus Maimonides : “God may choose of men whom he pleaseth, and send him, it matters not whether he be wise and learned, or unlearned and unskilful, old or young ; only this is required, that he be a virtuous, good, and honest man. For hitherto there was never any that could say that God did cause the Divine majesty to dwell in a vicious person, unless he had first reformed himself.”

Indeed common reason will teach us, that it is not likely God would extraordinarily inspire any men, and send them thus specially authorized by himself to declare his truth, who were vicious and of unhallowed lives ; and so the apostle Peter, 2 epist. ch. i. tells us plainly, they were “ holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Neither is it probable that those who were any way of crazed minds, or who were inwardly of inconsistent tempers by reason of any perturbation could be very fit for these serene impressions. And

therefore the Hebrew doctors universally agree in this rule, "That the Spirit of prophecy never rests upon any but a holy and wise man, one whose passions are allayed." That temper of mind principally required by them is a free cheerfulness, in opposition to grief, anger, or any other sad and melancholy passions. So *Gem. Pesac.* cap. 6, "Every man, when he is in a passion, if he be a wise man, his wisdom is taken from him ; if a prophet, his prophecy."

The first part of this aphorism they there declare by the example of Moses, who, they say, prophesied not in the wilderness after the return of the spies that brought an ill report of the land of Canaan, by reason of his indignation against them. And the last part from the example of the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings iii. 15. I will not here dispute the punctualness of the traditions concerning Moses, though I doubt not that the main scope is true, viz. that the Spirit of prophecy used not to reside with any black or melancholy passions, but required a serene and pacate temper of mind, being itself of a mild and gentle nature.

Now as this Divine Spirit thus actuated free and cheerful souls, so the evil spirit actuated sad, melancholy minds, as we heard before, and as we may see in the example of Saul. And indeed that evil spirit which is said to have possessed him, seems to be nothing else originally but anguish and grief of mind, however wrought upon by some insinuations of an evil spirit. And this sometime instigated him to prophesy after the fashion of such melancholy fury, 1 Sam. xviii. 10, "And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house ;" which Jonathan renders by, "He talked madly." R. Solomon upon the place, expounds it to the same purpose.

So that, according to the strain of all the Jewish scholiasts, by this evil spirit of Saul is here meant a melancholy kind of madness, which made him prophesy

or speak distractedly and inconsistently. To these we may add R. L. B. Gersom, “ He spake in the midst of the house very confusedly, by reason of that evil spirit.” The proper cure of it was the harmony and melody of David’s music, which was therefore made use of to compose his mind, and to allay these turbulent passions. And that was the reason why music was so frequently used, viz. to compose the animal part, that all kind of perturbations being dispelled, and a gentle tranquillity ushered in, the soul might be the better disposed for the Divine breathings of the prophetical Spirit.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Sons or Disciples of the Prophets. An Account of several Schools of prophetical Education.

AND therefore we find frequently such passages in Scripture as strongly insinuate that, anciently, many were trained up in a way of school discipline, that they might be probationers to these degrees, which none but God himself could confer upon them. Yet while they heard others prophesy, there was sometimes an *afflatus* upon them also, their souls as it were sympathizing (like unisons in music) with the souls of those which were touched by the Spirit. And this seems to be the meaning of that story, 1 Sam. xix. where all Saul’s messengers sent to Naioth in Rama to apprehend David, (and at last he himself,) are said to fall a prophesying.

And this is clearly suggested by the Jewish writers, who tell us that this Naioth in Rama was a school of prophetical education ; that Samuel was the president of this school or college, disciplining those young scholars, and training them up to those preparatory qualifications which might dispose them for prophecy. So we find it ver. 20, “ And when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing, as appointed, over them, the Spirit

of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied."

These disciples of the prophets are called **בְּנֵי הַנּ֬וּבִיאִים**, *sons of the prophets*: and these are they which are meant 1 Sam. x. 5, in those words, "a company of the prophets;" or, if you please, in Kimchi's language, "A company of scribes, that is, scholars: for the scholars of the wise men were called scribes: for they were the scholars of the greater prophets, and these scholars were called the sons of the prophets. Now the greater prophets, which lived in the time from Eli to David, were Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun.

And thus we must understand the meaning of that question, ver. 12, "Who is their father?" Which gave occasion to that proverbial speech afterwards used commonly among the Jews, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" of one that was suddenly raised up to some dignity which, by his education, he was not fitted for. To which we may add the testimony of R. Levi B. Gersom, that the prophets here spoken of were the scholars of Samuel, who trained them up to a degree of prophetical perfection, and so is called their father.

Of these disciples we find frequent mention in Scripture: so 2 Kings iv. 38, we read of the sons or disciples "of the prophets in Gilgal." And, chap. vi, Elisha is there brought in as their master, at whose command they were, and therefore they ask leave to enlarge their dwellings. And Elisha himself was trained up by Elijah as his disciple; and therefore in 2 Kings iii. 11, it was thought enough to prove that he was a prophet, for that he had been Elijah's disciple, and "poured water upon his hands." And 2 Kings ix. 1, Elisha sends one of these his ministering disciples to anoint Jehu to be king of Israel. And 1 Kings xx. 35, the young prophet there sent to reprove Ahab for sparing Benhadad, king of Syria, is called by the Chaldee paraphrast, "One of the sons" the disciples, "of the prophets." And hence it was that Amos urgeth the extraordinariness of his commission from God, ch. vii. 14, "I was no prophet, nor

was I a prophet's son. He was not prepared for prophecy, or trained up so as to be fitted for a prophetical function by his discipleship," as Abarbanel glosseth upon the place. And therefore Divine inspiration found him out of the ordinary road of prophets among his herds of cattle, and in an extraordinary way moved him to go to Bethel, there to declare God's judgments against the king and people, even in the king's chapel. To conclude, in the New Testament, when John Baptist and our Saviour called disciples to attend upon them, and to learn Divine oracles from them, it seems to have been no new thing, but that which was the common custom of the old prophets.

Of these prophets there were several schools or colleges, in several cities, according as occasion was to employ them. So we read of a college in Jerusalem, 2 Kings xxii. 14, where Huldah the prophetess lived, which is called *משנה* in the original, and translated by Kimchi *מָרְדָךְ*, *a school*. So 2 Kings, ch. ii. and iv. we meet with divers places set down, as those where the residence of those young prophets was, as Bethel, and Jericho, and Gilgal. So Kimchi observes upon the place, "As the sons of the prophets were in Bethel and Jericho, so were there also of them in several other places. And the main reason why they were thus dispersed in many of the cities of Israel was this, that they might reprove the Israelites that were there. And their prophecy was wholly according to the exigency of those times; and therefore it was that their prophecy was not committed to writing." From hence some of the Jewish writers tell us of a certain succession of prophecy, one continually like an evening-star shining upon the hemisphere, when another was set. Kimchi tells us of this mystical gloss upon those words, 1 Sam. iii. 3, 'Ere the lamp of God went out.' "This is spoken mystically concerning the light of prophecy, according to that saying amongst our doctors, [the sun riseth and the sun setteth,] that is, Ere God makes the sun of one righteous man to set, he makes the sun of another righteous man to rise."

CHAP. X.

Of Bath Kol : that it succeeded in the room of Prophecy : that it was by the Jews counted the lowest degree of Revelation.

BEFORE we speak of the highest, it may not be amiss to take notice of the lowest degree of revelation among the Jews, which was inferior to all which they call by the name of prophecy ; and this was their בָּתְהַקָּוֶל, *Bath Kol, the daughter of a voice* : which was nothing but a voice which was heard as descending from heaven, directing them in any affair : which kind of revelation might be to one (as Maimonides tells us,) that was no way prepared for prophecy.

Of this we have mention made in one of the ancientest monuments of Jewish learning, which is P. R. Eliezer, cap. 44, and otherwise very frequently among the Jewish writers, as that which was a frequent thing after the ceasing of prophecy among the Jews. Josephus tells a story of Hircanus, the high priest, how he heard this voice from heaven, which told him of the victory which his sons had got at Cyzicum against Antiochus the same day the battle was fought ; and thus, (he says,) while he was offering up incense in the temple, he was made partaker of a vocal converse with God.

This R. Isaac Angarensis urgeth against the Karæi, (a sort of Jews that reject all talmudical traditions,) that the grand doctors of the Jews received such traditions from the LXXII senators, who were guided either by *Bath Kol*, or something answerable to it, in the truth of things, after all prophecy was ceased : “ There is a tradition that the men of the great Sanhedrim were bound to be skilled in the knowledge of all sciences, and therefore it is much more necessary that prophecy should not be taken from them, or that which should supply its room, viz. the daughter of voice, and the like.”

But we shall here leave our author to his Judaical superstition, and take notice of two or three places in the New Testament that seem to be understood of this, which the constant tradition of the Jews assures us to have succeeded in the room of prophecy. The first is John xii. where this heavenly voice was conveyed to our Saviour, as if it had been the noise of thunder, but was not well understood by those that stood by, who therefore thought that either it thundered, or that it was a mighty voice of some angel that spake to him: ver. 28, 29, “Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified my name, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by and heard it, said it thundered; others said that an angel spake to him.” So Matt. iii. 17, after our Saviour’s baptism, upon his coming out of the water, the Evangelist tells us that, “the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended upon him in the shape of a dove, and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” And last of all, we meet with this kind of voice upon our Saviour’s transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 5, 6, which is there so described as coming out of a cloud, as if it had been loud like the noise of thunder, “Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased:” which voice, it is said, the three disciples that were with him in the mount heard, as we are told in the following verse, and also 2 Pet. i. 17, 18. From whence we are informed that it was this *daughter of a voice* which came for the apostles’ sakes that were with him, as a testimony of that glory and honour with which God magnified his Son; which apostles were not yet raised to the degree of prophecy, but only made partakers of a voice inferior to it. The words are these, “He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom

I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount."

CHAP. XI.

Of the highest Degree of Divine Inspiration, viz. the Mosaical. Four Differences between the Divine Revelations made to Moses and to the rest of the Prophets. How the Doctrine of Men prophetically inspired is to approve itself by Miracles, or by its Reasonableness. The Sympathy between a holy Mind and Divine Truth.

WE now come briefly to inquire into the highest degree of Divine inspiration, which was the Mosaical, that by which the law was given ; and this we may best do by searching out the differences of Moses's inspiration from that which was properly called prophecy. And these we shall take out of *Maimonides de Fund. Legis*, cap. 7, where they are fully described.

The first is, that Moses was made partaker of these Divine revelations when awake ; whereas God manifested himself to all the other prophets in a dream or vision. "What is the difference between the prophecy of Moses and the prophecy of all other prophets ? All other prophets did prophesy in a dream or vision ; but Moses, our master, when he was waking and standing, according to what is written, (Num. vii. 89,) ' And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, (i. e. God,) then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him.' "

The second difference is, that Moses prophesied without the mediation of any angelical power, by an influence derived immediately from God ; whereas in all other prophecies some angel appeared to the prophet : " All prophets did prophesy by the help or ministry of an angel, and therefore they did see that which they saw in parables

or under some dark representation; but Moses prophesied without the ministry of an angel." This he proves from Num. xii. 8, where God says of Moses, "I will speak to him mouth to mouth;" and so Exod. xxxiii. 11, "The Lord spake to Moses face to face."

But we must not here so much adhere to Maimonides as to forget what we are told in the New Testament concerning the ministry of angels which God used in giving the law itself: so St. Stephen discourses of it, Acts vii. 53, and St. Paul to the Galatians tells us, "the law was given by the disposition of angels in the hand of a Mediator," that is, Moses, the Mediator then between God and the people. And therefore I should rather think the meaning of those words, "face to face," to import the clearness and evidence of the intellectual light wherein God appeared to Moses, which was greater than any of the prophets were made partakers of.

But there may be yet a farther meaning of those words, "face to face," and that is the *friendly and amicable way* whereby all Divine revelations were made to Moses; for so it is added in the text, "As a man speaketh unto his friend."

And this is the third difference which Maimonides assigns, "All the other prophets were afraid, and troubled, and fainted; but Moses was not so: for the Scripture saith, 'God spake to him as a man speaks to his friend; that is, as a man is not afraid to hear the words of his friend, so was Moses able to understand the words of prophecy without any disturbance and astonishment of mind.'

The fourth and last difference is the liberty of Moses's spirit to prophesy at all times, as we heard before out of Num. vii. 89. He might have recourse at any time to the sacred oracle (in the tabernacle,) which spake from between the cherubim: and so Maimonides lays down this difference, "None of the prophets did prophesy at what time they would, save Moses, who was clothed with

the Holy Spirit when he would, and the spirit of prophecy did abide upon him. Neither had he need to prepare himself for it, for he was always disposed and in readiness as a ministering angel: and therefore could he prophesy at what time he would, according to that which is spoken in Num. ix. 8, ‘Tarry you here a little, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.’”

We have now seen what is this Mosaic degree, which it was necessary should be transcendent and extraordinary, because it was the basis of all future prophecy among the Jews. For all the prophets mainly aim to establish the law of Moses, as to the practical observation of it; and therefore it was so strongly manifested to the Israelites by signs and miracles done in the sight of all the people, and his familiarity and acquaintance with heaven testified to them all, the Divine voice being heard by them all at mount Sinai; which dispensation amounted at least to as much as a *Bath Kol* to the very lowest of the people. What that voice was which they heard, the later Jews are scarcely well agreed. But Maimonides, according to the most received opinion, tells that they only heard those first words of the law distinctly, viz. “I am the Lord thy God,” and, “Thou shalt have none other gods,” and only the sound of all the rest of the words in which the remainder of the law was given.

And here, by the way, we may take notice, that that Divine inspiration, which is conveyed to any one man, primarily benefits none but himself; and therefore many times it rested in this private use, not profiting any but those to whom it came. And the reason of this is manifest, for that an inspiration, abstractedly considered, can only satisfy the mind of him to whom it is made, of its own authority. And therefore that one man may know that another hath a doctrine revealed to him by a prophetic spirit, he must also either be inspired or be confirmed in the belief of it by some miracle, whereby it may appear that God hath committed his truth to such an one; which course our Saviour himself and his dis-

ciples took to confirm the truth of the gospel. Or else there must be so much reasonableness in the thing itself, that, by moral arguments, it may be sufficient to beget a belief in the minds of sober men.

I wish this last way of becoming acquainted with Divine truth were better known amongst us. For when we have once attained to a true, sanctified frame of mind, we have then attained the end of all prophecy, and see all Divine truth that tends to the salvation of our souls in the Divine light, which always shines in the purity and holiness of a new creature, and so needs no farther miracle to confirm us in it. And indeed that god-like glory and majesty which appear in the naked simplicity of true goodness, will, by its own sympathy, with all saving truth, friendly entertain and embrace it.

CHAP. XII.

When the prophetical Spirit ceased in the Jewish Church.

The restoring of the prophetical Spirit by Christ.

When the prophetical Spirit ceased in the Christian Church.

HAVING now done with all those sorts of prophecy which we find any mention of; we shall inquire a little “what period of time it was in which this prophetical spirit ceased both in the Jewish and Christian churches.”

And, first, for the period of time when it ceased in the Jewish, I find our Christian writers differing. Justin Martyr would needs persuade us that it was not till the time of Christ. This he inculcates often in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew. But Clemens Alexandrinus hath more truly, with the consent of all Jewish antiquity, resolved us, that all prophecy determined in Malachi. And the Jewish doctors tell us, that from the time in which the prophets expired, the *Urim* and *Thummim* ceased. Yea, all prophecy expired, and there was left only a *Bath Kol* to succeed some time in the room of it.

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This cessation of prophecy determined as it were that old dispensation wherein God manifested himself to the Jews under the law, that so, that growing old, and thus wearing away, they might expect that new dispensation of the Messiah, which had been promised long before, and which should again restore this prophetical Spirit more abundantly. And this interval is insinuated by Joel ii. in those words concerning the later times; “In those days shall your sons and daughters prophesy.” And so St. Peter makes use of the place to take off that admiration which the Jews were possessed with to see so plentiful an effusion of the prophetic Spirit again: and therefore this Spirit of prophecy is called the testimony of Jesus, Apoc. ch. xix.

We come now to the second inquiry, “What time the Spirit of prophecy, which was restored by our Saviour, ceased in the Christian church.” It may be thought that St. John was the last of Christian prophets, for that the Apocalypse is the latest dated of any book which is received into the canon of the New Testament. But I know no place of Scripture that intimates any such thing, as if the Spirit of prophecy was so soon to expire. And indeed if we may believe the primitive fathers, it did not; though it over-lived St. John’s time but a little. Eusebius tells us of one Quadratus, “who, together with the daughters of Philip, had the gift of prophecy.” This Quadratus, as he tells us, lived in Trajan’s time, which was but in the beginning of the second century. And a little after, speaking of good men in that age, he adds, “Many strange and admirable virtues of the Divine Spirit as yet shewed forth themselves by them.” And the same author, lib. 4, § 18, tells us out of Justin Martyr, who lived in the second century, and then wrote his Apology for the Christians, that the gift of prophecy was still to be seen in the church. Yet, not long afterward, there is little or no remembrance of the prophetical Spirit remaining in the church.

To conclude. There is indeed in antiquity, frequent

mention of some miracles wrought in the name of Christ ; but less is said concerning the prophetical virtue after the second century. It was rare, and to be seen but sometimes, and more obscurely in some few Christians only.

CHAP. XIII.

Some Rules and Observations concerning prophetic Writ in general.

WE should now shut up all the discourse about prophecy ; only, before we conclude, it may not be amiss to add a few rules for the better understanding prophetical writing in general.

1. The first is concerning the style of prophecy ; whether that was not peculiarly the work of the prophet himself ; whether it does not seem that the prophetical spirit dictated the matter only or principally, and left the words to the prophet himself. It may be considered that God made not use of idiots or fools to reveal his will by ; and that he imprinted such a clear copy of his truth upon them, as that it became their own sense, being digested fully in their understandings ; so as they were able to deliver and represent it to others as truly as any can paint forth his own thoughts. Therefore, I think, to doubt whether the prophets might not mistake in representing the mind of God in their prophetical inspirations, except all their words had been dictated to them, is to question whether they could speak sense as wise men, and tell their own thoughts and experiences truly or not. And indeed it seems most agreeable to the nature of all these prophetical visions and dreams, wherein the nature of the enthusiasm consisted in a symbolical and shaping forth of intelligible things in their imaginations, and enlightening the understanding to discern the scope and meaning of them ; that those words and phrases in which

they were expressed to the hearers afterwards, should be the prophet's own. For the matter was not, (as seems evident from what hath been said,) represented always by words, but by things. Though I know that sometimes in these visions they had a voice speaking to them ; yet it is not likely that voice should so dilate and comment upon things, as it was fit the prophet should do when he repeated the same things to vulgar ears.

It may also further be considered, that our Saviour and his apostles generally quote passages out of the Old Testament as they were translated by the LXX, and that where the LXX have much varied the manner of phrasing things from the original. Which it is not likely they would have done, had the original words been the very dictate of the Spirit ; for certainly that would not need any such paraphrastical variations, as being of themsclves full and clear enough ; besides, herein they might seem to weaken the authenticity of the Divine Oracles.

Besides, we find the prophets speaking every one of them in his own dialect ; and such a variety of style appears in their writings, as may argue them to have spoken according to their own genius. Which is observed by the Jews themselves in all the prophets, except Moses, and that part of Moses only which contains the decaloguc. Abarbanel gives us a full account of this, upon occasion of some phrases in Jeremiah concerning Edom, “ The prophets did not prophesy in the same manner as Moses did : for he prophesied from God immediately, from whom he received not only the prophecy, but also the very words and phrases ; and accordingly as he heard them, so he wrote them in the book of the law, in the very same words which he heard from God. But, as for the rest of the prophets, they beheld in their visions the things themselves which God made known to them, and both declared and expressed them in their own phraseology.”

Thus we see he ascribes the phrase and style every

where to the prophet himself, except only in the law, which he supposeth to have been dictated *totidem verbis*: which is probable enough, if he mean the law strictly so taken, viz. for the decalogue, as is most likely he doth. Yet God did so far superintend in their copying forth his truth, as not to suffer them to swerve from his meaning.

2. In the next place, for the better understanding prophetic writing, we must observe, that there is sometimes a seeming inconsistency in things spoken, if we examine them by the strict, logical rules of method. We must not, therefore, in any prophetical vision, look for a constant methodical contexture of things carried on in a perpetual coherence. The prophetic Spirit doth not tie itself to these rules of art, or thus knit up its dictates systematically. This would rather argue a human and artificial contrivance than any inspiration. And therefore Tully judiciously excepts against the authenticity of those verses of the Sibyls which he met with in his time, (and which were the same perhaps with those we now have,) because of those acrostics, and some other things, which argued an elaborate artifice, and an affected diligence of the writer. We must not seek for any methodical concatenation of things in the law, or indeed in any other part of prophetical writ; it being an usual thing with them many times to knit the beginning and end of time together. We do not often find curious transitions, nor exact dependence of one thing upon another; but frequently things of very different natures, and that were cast into periods of time secluded one from another by vast intervals, all couched together in the same vision; as Jerome hath observed in many places. And thus he takes notice in Daniel xi. 2; that whereas there were thirteen kings between Cyrus and Alexander the Great, the prophet speaks of but four, skipping over the rest, as if the other nine had filled up no part of the interval. The like he observes upon Jeremiah xxi. 1, and otherwhere; as likewise sudden and abrupt introductions of

persons, mutations of persons, (exits and intrats upon this prophetical stage being made as it were in an invisible manner,) and transitions from the voice of one person to another. The prophetical Spirit, though it make no noise and tumult in its motions, yet it is most quick, spanning as it were from the centre to the circumference; it moves most swiftly, though most gently.

3. The last rule we shall observe is, that no prophecy is to be understood of the state of the world to come. For indeed it is altogether impossible to describe that, or to comprehend it in this life. Therefore all Divine revelation in Scripture must concern some state in this world. And so we must understand all those places that treat of "a new* heaven and a new earth." So we must understand the New Jerusalem mentioned in the New Testament, in that prophetical book of the Apocalypse. And thus the Jews were wont universally to understand them, according to that maxim ascribed to R. Jochanan, " All the prophets prophesied to the days of the Messiah; but as for the world to come, eye hath not seen it." So they constantly expound that passage in Isaiah lxiv. 4, " Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." And according to this aphorism our Saviour seems to speak, when he says, " All the prophets and the law prophesied until John," Matt. xi. 13, *εως Ιωαννου, i. e.* they prophesied to or for that dispensation which was to begin with John, who lived in the time of the twilight, as it were, between the law and the gospel. They prophesied of those things which should be accomplished within the period of the gospel-dispensation which was ushered in by John.



* To this and the next sentence Mr. Wesley puts a query, the truth of them being very questionable.

As for the state of blessedness in heaven, it is too great for the mind of man to comprehend now.*

* But though we cannot *comprehend* it, we surely may form some idea of it from its being spoken of by Christ and his apostles, and as consisting chiefly in the vision and enjoyment of God, and the society of saints and angels. The *pure in heart*, said Jesus, *shall see God*; *they shall see his face*, said St. John; *and his name shall be on their foreheads*, which he explains in his 1st Epistle, ch. iii. 2, *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is: we now see through a glass darkly*, said St. Paul, *but then face to face: we now know in part, then shall we know as we are known: and God will be our portion for ever*, Psalm lxxiii. 26.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The reader may remember, that our author, in the beginning of his treatise of the immortality of the soul, propounded these three great principles of religion to be treated of; 1. The immortality of the soul; 2. The existence and nature of God; 3. The communication of God to mankind through Christ. And having spoken largely to the two former principles of natural theology, he thought fit (as a preparation to the third, which imports the revelation of the gospel) to speak something concerning prophecy, the way whereby revealed truth is dispensed to us. Of this he intended to treat but a little, and then pass on to the third and last part, viz. Those principles of revealed truth which tend most to advance true and real piety. But in his discoursing of prophecy, so many considerable inquiries offered themselves to his thoughts, that by that time he had finished his discourse, (designed at first only as a preface,) his office of catechist in the college expired. Thus far had the author proceeded in that year of his office. And it was not long after that bodily distempers and weaknesses began more violently to seize upon him, which, the summer following, put a period to his life here; (a life so every way beneficial to those who had the happiness to converse with him.)

Sic multis ille bonis flebilis occidit. Thus he who designed to speak of God's communication of himself to mankind through Christ, was taken up by God into a more immediate participation of himself in blessedness. Had he lived to have finished the remaining part of his designed method, the reader may easily conceive what a valuable piece that discourse would have been. Yet that he may not altogether want the author's labours upon such an argument, I thought good, in the next place, to adjoin a discourse of the like nature, (delivered heretofore by the author, in some chapel-exercises) from which I shall not detain the reader by any more preface.

A

DISCOURSE,

TREATING OF

*Legal Righteousness, Evangelical Righteousness,
or, the Righteousness of Faith:*

THE DIFFERENCE

BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL,

AND

THE OLD AND NEW COVENANT;

OF

JUSTIFICATION AND DIVINE ACCEPTANCE;

AND THE

CONVEYANCE OF THE EVANGELICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

TO US BY FAITH.



“ Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” MATT. v. 20.

“ For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did.” HEB. vii. 19.

OF
LEGAL RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND OF
THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH.

ROMANS IX. 31, 32.

“ But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.”

CHAP. I.

The Introduction, shewing what it is to have a right Knowledge of Divine Truth, and what it is that is either available or prejudicial to the true Christian Knowledge and Life.

THE doctrine of the Christian religion propounded to us by our Saviour and his apostles, is set forth with so much simplicity, and yet with so much repugnancy to that degenerate spirit that rules in the hearts and lives of men, that we may truly say of it, it is both the easiest and hardest thing. It is a revelation wrapped up in a complication of mysteries, like that book of the Apocalypse, which both unfolds and hides those great secrets that it treats of. The principles of true religion are all in themselves plain and easy, delivered in the most familiar way,

so that he that runs may read them ; they are so clear and perspicuous, that they need no key of demonstration to unlock them ; and yet it is wisdom in a mystery which the princes of this world understand not ; a sealed book which the greatest philosophers may be unacquainted with. It is like that pillar of fire and of a cloud that parted the Israelites and the Egyptians, giving a clear and comfortable light to all those that are under the guidance thereof, but being full of darkness to those that rebel against it. Divine truth is not to be discerned so much in a man's brain as in his heart. Divine wisdom is a tree of life to them that find her, and it is only life that can feelingly converse with life ; all the thin speculations and subtle discourses of philosophy cannot so well unfold or define any sensible object, nor tell any one so well what it is, as his own naked sense will do. There is a Divine and spiritual sense which only is able to converse internally with the life and soul of Divine truth, as mixing and uniting itself with it, while vulgar minds behold only the outside of it. Though in itself it be most intelligible, and such as man's mind may most easily apprehend ; yet there is a crust of impurity (as the Hebrew writers call it) upon all corrupt minds, which hinders the lively taste of it. This is the thick and palpable darkness which cannot comprehend that Divine light that shines in the minds of all men, but makes them deny that very truth, which they seem to entertain. The world through wisdom (as the apostle speaks), knew not God. Those great disputers of this world were too full of nice and empty speculations to know him who is only to be discerned by an humble and self-denying mind. Their curiosity served rather to dazzle their eyes than to enlighten them ; while they rather braved themselves in their knowledge of the Deity, than humbly subjected their souls to a compliance with it ; making the divinity nothing else but, as it were, a flattering glass that might reflect and set off to them the beauty of their own wit and parts ; and while they seemed to converse with God himself, they rather

courted their own image in him. Therefore the best acquaintance with religion is, a knowledge taught by God. It is a light that descends from heaven, which is only able to guide the souls of men to heaven from whence it comes. The Jewish doctors used to put it among the fundamental articles of their religion, “That their law was from heaven;” we may much rather reckon it amongst the principles of the Christian religion in a higher way, that it is an influx from God upon the minds of good men. And this is the great design of the gospel, to unfold to us the true way of recourse to God; a contrivance for uniting the souls of men to him, and deriving a participation of God to men, to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to establish the true tabernacle of God in the spirits of men, which was done in a typical and emblematical way under the law. And herein consists the main pre-eminence which the gospel hath above the law, in that it so clearly unfolds the method of uniting human nature to Divinity, which the apostle seems mainly to aim at in these words—“ But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.”

CHAP. II.

An Inquiry into that Jewish Notion of a legal Righteousness, which is opposed by St. Paul, viz. that the Law externally dispensed to them, and conjoined with the Power of their own free Will, was sufficient to procure them Acceptance with God, and to acquire Merit enough to purchase eternal Life.

FOR the unfolding whereof we shall endeavour to search out, first, What the Jewish notion of righteousness was, which the apostle here condemns.

Secondly, What the evangelical righteousness, or righte-

ousness of faith is, which he endeavours to establish in the room of it.

For the first. That which the apostle here blames the Jews for, seems to be nothing else but a compendium of all that which he elsewhere disputes against them for; which is not merely concerning the notion of justification, as some think, viz. whether the formal notion of it respects only faith, or works in the person justified, (though there may be a respect to that also), but it is of a greater latitude—it is concerning the whole way of life and happiness, and the proper scope of restoring mankind to perfection and union with the Deity, which the Jews expected by virtue of that system of laws which was delivered upon Mount Sinai, augmented and enlarged by their own traditions; which, that we may the better understand, perhaps it may not be amiss a little to traverse the writings of their most approved ancient authors, that so finding out their constant-received opinions concerning their law and the works thereof, we may the more fully understand what St. Paul and the other apostles aim at in their disputes against them.

The Jewish notion generally of the law, is this: “That in that body of laws, distinguished ordinarily into moral, judicial, and ceremonial, was comprised the whole method of raising man to his perfection; and that they, having only this book of laws, without them to converse with, needed nothing else to procure eternal life, perfection, and happiness; as if this had been the only means God had for the saving of men and making them happy, to set before them, in an external way, a volume of laws, and so to leave them to work out and purchase to themselves eternal life in the observance of them.”

This general notion of theirs we shall unfold in two particulars: First, as a foundation of all the rest, they took up this as a common principle, “That man had such an absolute and perfect free-will, and such a sufficient power from within himself to determine himself to virtue and goodness, that he only needed some law to exercise this

innate power about ; and therefore needed not that God should do any thing more for him than merely to acquaint him with his Divine will.”

And for this we have Maimonides asserting fully and masterially, that this was one of their *radices fidei*, or articles of faith, and one main foundation upon which the law stood. His words are these, in *Halaccah teshuba*, or treatise on repentance, chap. v. “ The Power of free-will is given to every man to determine himself (if he will) to that which is good, and to be good ; or to determine himself to that which is evil, and to be wicked if he will. Both are in his power, according to what is written in the law, Behold, man is become as one of us, to know good and evil ; that is to say, behold, this sort of creature, man, is alone (and there is not a second like to man) in this, viz. That man from himself, by his own proper knowledge and power, knows good and evil, and does what pleaseth him in an uncontrollable way, so as none can hinder him as to the doing either good or evil.”

And a little after he thus interprets those words in the Lamentations of the repenting church, chap. iii. 40, “ Let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord,” “ Seeing we, who are endued with the power of free-will, have most wittingly and freely committed all our transgressions ; it is meet and becoming we should convert ourselves by repentance, and forsake all our iniquities, forasmuch as this also is in our power ; this is the importance of those words, Let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord. And this is a great fundamental, the very pillar of the law and precept.”

Thus we see Maimonides, who was well versed in the ancientest Jewish learning, and in high esteem among all the Jews, is pleased to reckon this as a main principle and foundation upon which that law stood ; as indeed it must needs be, if life and perfection might be acquired by virtue of those legal precepts set before their external senses, and promulgated to their ears, as the statute-laws of

any other common-wealth use to be. Which was the very notion they themselves had of these laws ; and therefore in Bereshith Rabba, (a very ancient writing) the Jewish doctors taking notice of that passage in the Canticles, “ Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,” thus comment upon it ; “ At the time of the giving of the law, the congregation of Israel desired that Moses might speak to them, they being not able to hear the words of God himself. And while he spake, they heard, and, hearing, forgot ; and thereupon moved this debate among themselves, What is this Moses, a man of flesh and blood ? and what is his law, that we so soon learn and so soon forget it ? O that God would kiss us with the kisses of his mouth ! ” That is, in their sense, that God would teach them in a more vital and internal way. And then (as they go on) Moses makes this answer, “ That this could not be then ; but it should so come to pass in the time to come, in the days of the Messiah, when the law should be written in their hearts, as it is said, Jer. xxxi “ I will write it in their hearts.”

By this we may see how necessary it was for the Jews, that they might be consistent to their grand principle of obtaining life and perfection by this outward law, to establish such a power of free-will, as might be able uncontrollably to entertain it, and so readily by its own strength perform all the dictates of it.

And that Maimonides was not the first of the Jewish writers who expound that passage, Gen. iii. “ Behold man is become like one of us, to know good and evil,” of free-will, may appear from the seventh Chaldee paraphrasts upon it, who all intimate the sense, and I grant not without something of truth ; for that liberty which mankind only in this lower world hath above other creatures, may be there also meant. But whatever it is, I am sure the Jewish commentators upon that place generally follow the rigid sense of Maimonides.

To this purpose R. Bechai, a man of no small learning both in the Talmudick and Cabalistical doctrine of the

Jews, tells us, that upon Adam's first transgression, that grand liberty of indifference equally to good or evil began to discover itself; whereas before that, he was all intellect and wholly spiritual, being from within only determined to that which was good. But I shall at large relate his words: "Adam, before his sin, acted from a necessity of nature, and all his actions were nothing else but the issues of pure and perfect understanding. Even as the angels of God, being nothing else but intelligences, put forth nothing else but acts of intelligence; just so was man before he sinned, and eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; but after this transgression, he had the power of election and free-will, whereby he was able to will good or evil." So that, according to the mind of our author, the original free-will is to be derived not so much from the creation, as from man's transgression, or eating of the forbidden fruit. So that the indifference of man's will to good or evil, and a power to determine himself freely to either, did then first of all unfold itself; whereas before, he conversed like a pure intelligence with its First Cause, without any propensity at all to material things, being determined, like a natural agent, solely to that which is good.

All this we have confirmed out of Nachmanides, an author sufficiently versed in all matters concerning the Jewish religion. His words are these, in his comment upon Deut. xxx. 13, "From the time of the creation man had a power of free-will within him to do good or evil, according to his own choice, as also through the whole time of the law; that so he might be capable of merit in freely choosing what is good, and of punishment in electing what is evil;" wherein he tells us that this free-will hath continued ever since the creation; we must not understand rigidly the very moment of man's creation, but that epocha taken with some latitude, so that it may include the time of man's first transgression. For he also after suggests, that before the first sin, Adam's

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power to good was a mere natural power, without any such indifference to evil ; and therefore he makes that state of Adam the model of future perfection, which the most ancient Jewish authors seem to expect in the time of their Messiah, which he expresseth in this manner ; “He shall not covet nor desire, (after a sensitive manner) but man shall return in the times of the Messiah to that primitive state he was in before the sin of the first man, who naturally did whatsoever was good, neither was there any thing and its contrary then in his choice.” Upon which ground he afterwards concludes, “That in those times of the Messiah there shall neither be merit nor demerit, because there shall be no free-will, which is the alone mother and nurse of both of them : but in the mean while, that good or evil is wholly in our own choice ; none prejudicing, or in the least degree hindering, the exercise of this liberty, neither from within nor from without, “none either in heaven or in earth.” And thus the same Nachmanides expounds that solemn attestation, Deut. xxx. 19, wherein heaven and earth are called to witness that that day life and death were set before them ; as if God himself had now established such a monarchial power in man, as heaven and earth should be in league with and faithful to.

Hereupon R. Saadia Gaon (so called by way of eminency) doubts not to tell us that the common sense of all the Jewish doctors was, that this liberty to good or evil was such an absolute authority established in a man’s soul, that it was independent upon God himself ; this being, as he saith in the book called Sepher emunah, the meaning of that maxim amongst the Jews, sometimes mentioned in the Talmud ; “All things are in the hand of God, except the fear of God.”

I am not ignorant there is another axiom of the Jews, which may seem partly to cross this, “That assistance is perpetually afforded to all endeavours both of sanctity and impiety.” But Maimonides hath told us, they mean

nothing else by it but this : That when men endeavour after the performance of the law, God, in a way of Providence, furnisheth them with external matter and means, giving them peace and riches, and other outward accommodations, whereby they have advantage and opportunity to perform all that good which their own free-will determines them to. Whereas wicked men find the like help of external matter and means for accomplishing their wicked designs.

Thus we see how the Jews, that they might lay a foundation of merit, and build up the magnificent fabric of their happiness upon the sandy foundation of *a dead letter without them*, endeavoured to strengthen it by as weak a rampart of their own self-sufficiency and the power of their own free-will, able, as they vainly imagined, to perform all righteousness, as being adequate and commensurate to the whole law of God in its most comprehensive sense and meaning ; looking upon the Fall of Man as the rise of that giant-like free-will, whereby they were enabled to bear up themselves against heaven, as a great accessory to their happiness, through the access of that multitude of Divine laws which were given to them. And so they reckoned upon a more triumphant kind of happiness, to be achieved by the merit of their own works, than that beggarly kind of happiness, as they looked upon it, which cometh like an alms from Divine bounty. Accordingly they affirm, “That happiness, by way of reward, is far greater and much more magnificent than that which is by way of mercy.”

CHAP. III.

The second Ground of the Jewish Notion of a legal Righteousness, viz. That the Law delivered to them on Mount Sinai was a sufficient Dispensation from God, and all that needed to be done by Him to bring them to Perfection and Happiness. And that the Scope of their Law was nothing but to afford them several Ways and Means of Merit.

THE secondground of that Jewish notion of legal righteousness is this ; “That the law, delivered to them upon Mount Sinai, was a sufficient dispensation from God, and all that needed to be done by him for the advancing of them to a state of perfection and blessedness ; and that the proper end of their law was nothing but to afford them several ways and means of merit.” Which is expressly delivered in the Mishnah, that therefore the precepts of the law were so many in number, that they might single out where they pleased, and in exercising themselves therein, procure eternal life : so Obadias de Bartenora expounds it ; “Whosoever shall perform any one of the six hundred and thirteen precepts of the law (so many they make in number), without any worldly respects, for love of the precepts, behold this man shall merit thereby everlasting life.” For they judged a reward due to the performance of every precept, which reward they supposed to be increased according to the secret estimation which God himself hath of any precept.

This was a great matter of debate among the Jews, which precepts they were that had the greatest reward due to the performance of them ; which controversy Maimonides in his comment upon this place thus resolves ; “That the measure of the reward annexed to the negative precepts might be collected from the measure of the punishments that were consequent upon the breach of them.” But this knot could not be so well solved in reference to the affirmative precepts, because the punishments annexed to the breach of them were more rarely defined in the law ; accordingly he expresseth himself to this sense ; “As for the affirmative precepts, it is not expressed what reward is due to every one of them ; and for this end, that we may not know which precept is most necessary to be observed, and which precept is of less necessity.” And a little after he tells us, “that for this reason their wise men said, whosoever shall exercise himself about any one precept, ought, without hesitation, to

continue in the performance of it, as being in the mean time freed from minding any other. For if God had declared which precept himself had most valued and settled the greatest revenue of happiness upon, then other precepts would not have been minded; and any one that should have busied himself in a precept of a lower nature, would presently have left that, when opportunity should have been offered of performing a higher." And hence we have also another Talmudical canon for the performing of precepts, of the same nature with the former, quoted by our foresaid author, "It is not lawful to skip over precepts, that is, as he expounds it, when a man is about to observe one precept, he may not skip over and relinquish that, that so he might apply himself to the observation of another." And thus, as the performance of any precept hath a certain reward annexed to it; so the measure of the reward, they suppose to be increased according to the number of those precepts which they observe, as it is defined by R. Tarphon, in the foresaid Mishnah, c. 2. "If thou hast been much in the study of the law, thou shalt be rewarded much; for faithful is the Lord thy master, who will render to thee a reward proportionable to thy work." And lest they should not yet be liberal enough of God's cost, they are also pleased to distribute rewards to any Israelite that shall abstain from the breach of a precept: for so we find it in the Mishnah, "Whosoever keeps himself from the breach of a precept, shall receive the reward as if he had kept the precept."

But this which hath been said concerning the performance of any one precept, must be understood with this caution, that the performance of such a precept be a continued thing, so as that it may collect the performance of many good works into itself; otherwise, the single performance of any one precept is only available, according to the sense of the Talmudical masters, to cast the scale, when a man's good works and evil works equally balance one another, as Maimonides telleth us in his comment upon the forenamed Mishnah.

For the better understanding whereof we must know, that the Jewish doctors are wont to distinguish three sorts of men, which are thus ranked by them, *Men perfectly righteous, men perfectly wicked, and a middle sort of men betwixt them.* Those they are wont to call perfectly righteous, who had no transgression or demerits that might be counted fit to be put into the balance against their merits ; and those they called simply righteous, whose merits out-weighed their demerits ; whereas, on the other side, the perfectly wicked in their sense were such as had no merits at all ; and those simply wicked, whose demerits made the weightiest scale ; and the middle sort were such as their good deeds and evil deeds equally balanced one another. Of this first sort of men, viz. the perfectly righteous, they supposed there might be many ; and such the Pharisees seem to have been in their own esteem, in our Saviour's time. And according to this notion, our Saviour may seem to have shaped his answer to that young man in the gospel, who asked him, “ What shall I do to inherit eternal life ? ” To which our Saviour propounds to him in so great a latitude, as thereby to take him off from his self-conceit, and that he might be convinced upon reflection, that he had fallen short of eternal life, in failing of a due performance of the Divine law. But he, insisting upon his own merit in this respect, inquires of our Saviour whether there be yet any thing wanting to make him one perfectly righteous. To this our Saviour replies, “ If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast.” The meaning of which reply may, as I conceive, be this ;—to convince him of his imperfect obedience to the law of God, from his over-eager love of this world. But, secondly, for those that were in the middle rank of men, the Jewish doctors had divers rules ; as, 1. In case a man's evil works and good were equal, the addition of one either way might determine them to eternal life or misery. 2. That in case a man's evil works should preponderate and weigh down his good, yet he

might cast the scale by repentance, if he would ; or, in the other world, by chastisements and punishments he might make expiation for them. These and the like ways they found out, lest any of their fraternity should miscarry. To all which we must take in this caution, which they were pleased to deliver, viz. that men's works have their different weight, some good works being so weighty that they may weigh in the balance against many evil works, and *vice versa*.

All which we shall find largely set down by R. Albo, 1. *de fundamentis fidei*, and partly by R. Saadia ; but especially by Maimonides, in his Treatise of Repentance, chap. iii. who also tells us of other expedients provided by their law for the securing of merit and happiness. And, in fine, they have found out so many artifices to entail a legal righteousness and eternal happiness upon all the Israelites, that, if it be possible, none might be left out of heaven ; as may partly appear by that question captiously proposed to our Saviour ; “Master, are there few that shall be saved ?” whereby they expected to ensnare him, themselves holding a general salvation of all the Jews by virtue of the law, however their wickedness might abound. Which we expressly find set down by Maimonides in the fore-named place ; “All wicked ones, whose evil deeds exceed their good deeds, shall be judged according to the measure of their evil deeds so exceeding ; and afterwards they shall have a portion in the world to come ; for that all Israelites have a portion in the world to come, and this notwithstanding their sins.” That maxim, “All Israelites have a portion in the world to come,” is taken out of the Mishnah 1. *Sanhedr.* c. 11, where it is put down as the most authentic opinion of the Jewish doctors, only some few are there recited who are excepted from this happiness : otherwise their greatest malefactors are not excepted from it : for so Obadias de Bartenora unfoldeth their meaning ; “Even such as are judged by the great Synedrim worthy of death for their

wickedness, these have a portion in the world to come. By the way, we may observe what a lean and spiritless religion this of the Jews was ; it was nothing but a lifeless form of external performances, which did not reach the inward man, being a mere bodily kind of drudgery and servility. And therefore our Saviour, when he models out religion to them, Matt. v. points them to something fuller of inward life and spirit, and such as might make them perfect, as their Father in heaven was perfect.

But before I leave this argument, it may not be amiss to examine what the Cabalistical Jews thought concerning this matter in hand, which in sum is this ; That the law, delivered upon Mount Sinai, was a device God had to knit and unite the Jews and the Shechinah, or Divine presence, together." And to this purpose R. Simeon Ben Jochai saith, " Whosoever doth exercise himself in the law, doth merit the possession of the upper inheritance which is in the holy kingdom above ; and doth also merit the possession of an inheritance here below in this world." Where we may take notice that the ancient Jews looked upon the land of Canaan as being typical and significative of a higher inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.; both which they supposed to be the due rewards of men's works. And therefore they talk so much in the same place of guardian angels which are continually passing to and fro between heaven and earth, as the heralds and messengers of men's good works to God in heaven. And further upon these words in Levit. xviii. 5, " Ye shall keep my statutes and judgments ; which, if a man do, he shall live in them ;" he tells us, " That the portion of Israel is meritorious, because that the Holy Blessed One delighteth in them above all nations ; and out of his favour and goodness to them gave the laws of truth, and planted amongst them the tree of life. Now what doth all this signify ? That since the Israelites are signed with the holy seal in their flesh, they are thereby acknowledged for the sons of God. As on the contrary, they that are

not sealed with this mark in their flesh, are not the sons of God, but are the children of uncleanness ; wherefore it is not lawful to contract familiarity with them, or to teach them the words of the law.” Which afterwards is urged further by another of their masters ; “ Whosoever instructeth any uncircumcised person, though but in the least precepts of the law, doth the same as if he should destroy the world, and deny the Name of the Holy Blessed One.

ALL which plainly amounts to thus much : That the law was given to the Israelites for this purpose, to enrich them with good works, and to augment their merits, and so to establish the foundations of life and blessedness amongst them ; and to make it a medium of the union betwixt God and men, as R. Eliezer speaketh of the near union between these three, the Holy Blessed One, the Law, and Israel.

There is one passage more in our fore-named author, R. Simeon Ben Jochai, at the end of Parashah Jethro, which may be worth our observing, as more fully hinting the perfection of the law, and setting that forth as an absolute and complete medium of rendering a man perfect ; “ When the Israelites stood upon Mount Sinai, they saw God eye to eye, and understood all secrets of the law, and the same day all uncleanness passed away from them, and all their bodies did shine in brightness like to the angels of heaven when they put on their bright shining robes to fit themselves for the embassy upon which they are sent by God their Lord.” And a little after, thus : “ And when their uncleanness passed away from them, the bodies of the Israelites became shining and clear without any defilement ; and their bodies did shine as the brightness of the firmament.” He concludeth, “ When the Israelites received the law upon Mount Sinai, the world was then perfumed with a most aromatic smell, and heaven and earth were established, and the Holy Blessed One was known above and below, and he ascended in his glory

above all things.” By all which expressions our author seems to aim at this, viz. To set forth the law as that which of itself was sufficient, without any other dispensation from God, for the perfecting of those to whom it was dispensed ; and to make them possessors of all righteousness here, and glory hereafter.

Thus we have endeavoured to make good that which we first propounded, namely, that the grand opinion of the Jews concerning the way to life and happiness was this : “ That the law of God externally dispensed, and only furnished out to them on tables of stone, joined with the power of their own free-will, was sufficient both to procure them acceptance with God, and to acquire merit enough to carry them with spread sails to eternal blessedness.”

So that we may see those disputes which St. Paul and other apostles maintained against the Jews touching the law and faith, were not merely about that one question, “ Whether justification formally and precisely respects faith alone ;” but were of a much greater latitude.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning the Evangelical Righteousness, or the Righteousness of Faith, and the true Difference between the Law and the Gospel, the old and the new Covenant.

HAVING done with the first inquiry, we now come to the second, which was this, “ What the evangelical righteousness, or the righteousness of faith is, which the apostle sets up against that of the law, and in what notion the law is considered by the apostle.” Which in sum was this, that the law was the ministry of death, and in itself an external and lifeless thing, neither could it procure or beget that Divine life in the souls of men, which God expects from all the heirs of glory, nor that glory which is only consequent upon a true, Divine life. Whereas, on

the other side, the gospel is set forth as a mighty efflux and emanation of life and spirit freely issuing forth from an omnipotent source of race and love, as that true God-like vital influence whereby the Divinity derives itself into the souls of men, enlivening and transforming them into its own likeness, and strongly imprinting upon them a copy of its own beauty and goodness. Briefly, “ It is that whereby God comes to dwell in us, and we in him.”

But that we may the more distinctly unfold the difference between “ that righteousness which is of the law,” and “ that righteousness which is of faith,” and so the better shew how the apostle undermines that fabric of happiness which the Jews had built up for themselves ; we shall observe, first in general, that the main thing which the apostle endeavours to beat down was, that proud and arrogant conceit which they had of merit, and to advance against it the notion of the Divine grace and bounty as the only fountain of all righteousness and happiness. For indeed that which all those Jewish notions aimed principally at, was the advancing of the powers of nature to such an height of perfection as might render them capable of meriting at God’s hands. And that perfection, which they speak so much of, was nothing but a mere sublimation of their own natural powers, performed by the strength of their own fancies. And therefore these contractors with heaven were so pleased to look upon eternal life as a fair purchase which they might make for themselves at their own charge ; as if the spring of all were in themselves. Their eyes were so much dazzled with those foolish fires of merit and reward kindled in their own fancies, that they could not see that light of Divine grace and bounty which shone about them.

And this swelling pride of theirs is that which St. Paul principally endeavours to chastise, in advancing faith so much as he doth in opposition to the works of the law. For which purpose he spends the first and second chapters of his epistle to the Romans in drawing up a charge

of such a nature against Gentiles and Jews, but principally against the Jews, who were the grand justiciaries, that might make them bethink themselves of imploring mercy, and of laying aside all plea of law and justice; and so chap. iii. 27, he shuts up all with a severe check to such presumptuous arrogance, “Where then is boasting?” This seems, then, to be the main end which St. Paul every where aims at in opposing *faith to the works of the law*, namely, to establish the foundation of righteousness and happiness upon the free mercy and grace of God. The magnifying of which, in the real manifestations of it, he holds forth upon all occasions, as the design of the gospel-administration; seeing it is impossible for men, by any works they can perform, to satisfy God’s justice for those sins which they have committed against him, or truly to comply with his Divine will, without his Divine assistance. So that the method of reconciling men to God, and reducing straying souls back again to him, was to be attributed wholly to another original than that which the Jews imagined. But,

Secondly, that righteousness of faith which the apostle sets up against the law, and compares with it, is indeed in its own nature a vital and spiritual administration, wherein God converseth with man; whereas the law was merely an external or dead thing in itself, not able to beget any true Divine life in the souls of men. All that legal righteousness which the Jews boasted of, was but from the earth earthly; consisting merely in external performances, and so falling extremely short of that internal and God-like frame of spirit which is necessary for a true union of the souls of men with God, and for making them capable of true blessedness.

But that we may the more distinctly handle this argument, we shall endeavour to unfold the true difference between the law and the gospel, as it seems evidently to be laid down every where by St. Paul in his epistles. And the difference between them is clearly this, viz. That the law was merely an external thing, consisting in such pre-

cepts as had only an outward administration ; but the gospel is an internal thing, a vital principle seating itself in the minds of men. And this is the proper difference between the law and the gospel, that the one is only an external administration, the other an internal. And therefore the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, calls the law, “ the ministration of the letter” and “ of death,” it being in itself but *a dead letter* ; as all that which is without a man’s soul must needs be. But on the other side he calls the gospel (because of the intrinsical and vital administration thereof in living impressions upon the souls of men) “ the ministration of the Spirit,” and “ the ministration of righteousness.” By which he cannot mean the history of the gospel ; for that would make the gospel itself as much an external thing as the law, and, according to the external administration, as much a *killing* or *dead letter* as the law was : and so we see that the preaching of Christ crucified was “ to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.” But indeed he means a vital efflux from God upon the souls of men, whereby they are “ made partakers of life and strength” from him : and therefore (ver. 7,) he thus expounds his own meaning of that short description of the law, namely, that it was *Διαχονικα τα θανατε εν γραμματιν, εντελυπωμενη εν λιθοις.* which, I think, may be fitly thus translated, “ it was a dead (or lifeless) administration,” (for so sometimes by an hebraism the genitive case *in regimine* is put for the adjective) or else “ an administration of death exhibited in letters, and engraven in tables of stone :” and therefore he tells us (ver. 6,) what the effect of it was in those words, “ The letter killeth,” as indeed all external precepts which have not a proper vital root in the souls of men, whereby they are able to secure them from the transgression of them, must needs do. Now to this *dead* or *killing letter* he opposes (ver. 8,) *a quickening Spirit*, or *the ministration of the Spirit*, which afterwards he expounds by *the ministration of righteousness*, that is, *the evangelical administration*. So that the *gospel* or *evangelical administration*

must be an *internal impression*, a vivacious and energetic spirit and principle of righteousness in the souls of men, whereby they are inwardly enabled to express a real conformity thereto. Upon this ground the apostle further pursues the effects of both these from the 14th verse to the end.

By all which the apostle means to shew us, how vast a difference there is between the external manifestations of God in a law of commandments, and those internal appearances of God, whereby he discovers the mighty power of his goodness to the souls of men.

Though the history and outward communication of the gospel to us, is to be always acknowledged as a special mercy and advantage, and certainly no less privilege to Christians than it was to the Jews to be intrusted with the oracles of God: yet it is plain that the apostle, where he compares the law and the gospel, doth by the gospel mean something which is more than an historical narration of the free love of God in the several contrivances of it for the redemption of mankind. For if this were all that is meant properly by the gospel, I see no reason why it should not be counted as weak and impotent a thing, as dead a letter as the law was, and so there would be no such vast difference between them as the apostle asserts there is. But in truth, the one is "an external declaration of God's will," the other "an internal manifestation of Divine life in men's souls." And therefore, Gal. iii. 21, he so distinguisheth between this double dispensation of God, that this evangelical dispensation is a quickening thing, able to beget Divine goodness in the souls of men; which because the law could not do, it was laid aside, as being insufficient to restore man to the favour of God, or to make him partaker of his righteousness. "If there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law;" where by righteousness he seems to mean the same thing which he meant by it when in his epistle to the Corinthians he calls the economy of the gospel, "the

ministration of righteousness," or, as בְּנֵת, is taken among Jewish writers, for acceptance with God, and that internal righteousness that qualifies the soul for eternal life. And so he takes it in a far more ample sense than that external righteousness of justification. And indeed it seems to express the just state of those who are renewed by the Spirit of God, and made partakers of that Divine life which is emphatically called the seed of God. For this righteousness is the proper result of an enlivening law, which is this new law of the gospel in opposition to that old law which was administered only in writing: and therefore this new law is called, in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. viii. 6, &c. *the better covenant*, whereas the old was faulty. In which place this is put down as the formal difference between the legal and evangelical administration, or the old and new covenant, that the old covenant was not only externally promulgated and wrapt up as it were in ink and parchment, or, at best, "engraven upon tables of stone;" whereas this new covenant is set forth "in living characters imprinted upon the vital powers of men's souls." So ver. 10, 11, "This is the covenant that I will make, I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts:" and therefore the old covenant is (ver. 7,) said not to be an unblamable or faultless thing, because it was not able to keep off transgressions, or hinder the violation of itself, no more than an inscription upon some pillar or monument is able to inspire life into those that read it: the old law or covenant being, in this respect, no other than all other civil constitutions are, which receive their efficacy merely from the willing compliance of men's minds with them, so that they must be enlivened by the subject that receives them, being dead things in themselves. But the evangelical or new law is such a thing as is an efflux of life and power from God himself, the original thereof, and produceth life wheresoever it comes. And to this double dispensation, viz. of law and gospel, doth St. Paul clearly refer, 2 Cor. iii. 3, "You are the epistle of Christ,

ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone :" which last words are a plain comment upon that kind of administering the law in a mere external way, to which he opposeth the gospel. And this argument he further pursues in the 7th and 8th chapters of the epistle to the Romans, in which last chapter, ver. 2, he styles the gospel "the law of the spirit of life," which was able to destroy the power of sin, and to introduce a spiritual and heavenly frame of soul into men, whereby they might be enabled to express a cheerful compliance with the law of God, and demonstrate a true, heavenly conversation and God-like life in this world.

It peculiarly belongs to God to write the laws of goodness in the tables of men's hearts. All the outward teachings of men are but dead things in themselves. But God's imprinting his mind and will upon men's hearts is properly that which is called the teaching of God, and then they become living laws written in the living tables of men's hearts fitted to receive and retain Divine impressions.

That we may come a little nearer to these words upon which this present discourse is built, this seems to be the scope of his argument in this place, where this law of righteousness may fairly be paralleled with that which before he called "the law of the Spirit," and which he therefore calls "the righteousness of faith," because it is received from God in a way of believing. For I cannot easily think that he should mean nothing else in this place but merely the righteousness of justification, as some would persuade us, but rather that his sense is much more comprehensive, so as to include the state of the gospel dispensation, which includes not only pardon of sins, but an inward spirit "of love, power, and of a sound mind," as he expresseth it, 2 Tim. i. 7. And this he thus opposeth to the law, Rom. x. 6, "But the righteousness of faith speaketh on this wise; Say not in thy heart, 'who shall ascend into heaven?'" &c. or, "Who

shall descend into the deep? But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach." The Jewish writers generally, commenting upon that place in Deuteronomy wholly refer it to the times of the Messiah, making it parallel with that place of Jeremiah which defines the new covenant to be "a writing of the law of God in men's hearts." And thus that life and salvation that result from the righteousness of faith is all, as faith itself is, derived from God graciously dispensing himself to the minds of men. Whereas if life could have been by the law, its original must have been resolved into men themselves who must have acted that "dead matter without them," and have produced that virtue and energy in it, by their exercising themselves therein, which of itself it had not; as the observance of any law enables that law itself to dispense that reward which is due to the observance of it. And therefore the righteousness of the law was so defined, "that he that did those things should live in them." And thus the New Testament every where seems to present to us this two-fold dispensation; the one consisting in an external and written law of precepts, the other in inward life and power.

Now from all this we may easily apprehend how much the righteousness of the gospel transcends that of the law, in that it hath a true command over the inward man, which it acts and informs; whereas the law, by all its menaces and punishments could only compel men to an external observance of it in the outward man.

And herein St. Paul every where magnifies this dispensation of the free mercy and grace of God, as being the only sovereign remedy against all the inward rooted maladies of sin and corruption, as that panacea, or balsam, which is the universal restorative of decayed and impotent nature. So he tells us, Rom. vi. "Sin shall not have dominion, because we are not under the law, but under grace." And this is that which made him so

much extol his acquaintance with Christ in the dispensation of grace, and to despise all things as loss, Philip. iii. where, among his other Jewish privileges, having reckoned up his blamelessness in all points touching the law, he undervalues them all, and counts all but loss, “for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.” In which place the apostle doth not mean to disparage “a real inward righteousness,” and the strict observance of the law; but his meaning is to shew how poor and worthless a thing all outward observances of the law are in comparison of a true internal conformity to Christ in the renovation of the mind and soul according to his image and likeness; as is manifest from ver. 9, 10, &c. in which he thus delivers his own meaning of that knowledge of Christ which he so much extolled, “That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Where, by the way, we may further take notice what this righteousness of faith and the righteousness of God are, according to his own true meaning, as he expounds himself, viz. a Christ-like nature in a man’s soul, or Christ appearing in the minds of men by the mighty power of his Divine Spirit, and thereby deriving a true participation of himself to them: so we have it ver. 18, “That I may know the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” And thus Christ and Moses are opposed, as Christ is the dispenser of grace and truth, of God’s free bounty, of life and substance: whereas Moses was but the minister of the law, of rites and shadows.

But it may perhaps be questioned whether the same internal dispensation of God was not as well under the law as since our Saviour’s coming. I reply, First, That this dispensation of grace was then a more mystical thing, and not so manifested to the world as it hath been since our Saviour’s coming. Secondly, This dispensation

of free grace was not that which properly belonged to the nation of the Jews ; what properly belonged to them was only a type and shadow of it.

Before our Saviour's coming, the great mysteries of religion being wrapped up in symbolical rites, (the unfolding of which was reserved for him who is the great interpreter of heaven and master of truth,) God was pleased to draw forth a scheme or copy of all that Divine economy and method of his commerce with mankind, and to make a draught of the whole artifice thereof in external matter. And therefore he singled out a company of men of the same common extraction, marked out from all other sorts of men by a character of genealogical sanctity, (for so circumcision was,) collected and united together by a common band of brotherhood ; and this he set up as an emblem of a Divine and holy seed or society of men, which are all, by way of spiritual generation, descended from himself. And hence it is that the Jews, (the whole Jewish nation universally considered,) who were but mere representatives of this spiritual fraternity, are called the holy seed, or the holy people. Afterwards amongst these he erects a government and polity, and rules over them in the way of a political prince, as hath been long since well observed by Josephus, who therefore properly calls the Jewish government, a theocracy, or the government of God himself.

And thus, in a scheme or figure, he shadows forth that spiritual kingdom which he would establish amongst that Divine society of men, in reference to which we have so much mention made of the kingdom of heaven in the gospel, which is not generally meant of the state of glory, much less of any outward church rites, but mainly of that exemplar of which the Jewish theocracy was an imitation. Lastly, as a political prince, God draws forth a body of laws as the political constitutions and rules of this government which he had set up, choosing mount Sinai for the theatre whereon he would promulge those laws, by which all his subjects should be governed. And

so I doubt not but that preface by which the law is ushered in, Exod. xx. which speaks of God's mercy in delivering them from the Egyptian thraldom, may very well be allegorized and mystically expounded. And all this was to signify that law which was to go forth from mount Sion, the promulgation whereof was to be in a vital and spiritual way among the subjects of this spiritual kingdom. To all which we may add those temporal inheritances which he distributed to the Jewish families, in imitation of those immortal inheritances which he shares out amongst his spiritual sons and subjects in heaven. And this I the rather add, because the Jews are much perplexed about untying this knot, what the reason should be that their law speaks so sparingly of any eternal reward, but runs out generally in promises of earthly blessings. By this we see the true reason of that which the apostle speaks concerning them, 2 Cor. iii. 14, "Until this day the same veil in the reading of the Old Testament remaineth untaken away." That veil, which was on Moses's face, was an emblem of all this great mystery. And this veil was upon the faces of the Jews in reading the Old Testament; they dwelling so much in a carnal converse with these symbols, which were offered them in reading the law, that they could not see through them into the thing signified thereby, and so embraced shadows instead of substance. Whereas this law should have been their school-master to have led them to Christ, whose law it prefigured; which, that it might do the more effectually, God had annexed to the breach of any one part of it such severe curses, that they might from thence perceive how much need they had of some further dispensation. And therefore this state of theirs is set forth by a state of bondage. For all external precepts carry perpetually an aspect of rigour to those minds that taste not the internal sweetness of them. And this is it which makes the gospel, or the new law, to be a free, noble, and generous thing, because it is seated in the souls of men. This I the rather observe, because the true meaning of that spirit of bondage, which the

apostle speaks of, is frequently mistaken. We might further, (if need were,) for a confirmation of this which we have spoken concerning the typicalness of the whole Jewish economy, appeal to the third and fourth chapters of the epistle to the Galatians, which cannot well be understood without this notion, where we have the Jewish church as a type of the true evangelical church, brought in as a child in its minority in servitude under tutors and governors, shut up under the law till the time of that emphatical revelation of the great mystery of God should come, till the day should break, and all the shadows of the night flee away.

That I may return from this digression, this briefly may be added, that under the old covenant there were amongst the Jews some that were evangelized; as under the gospel there are many that do Judaize, are of as legal and servile spirits as the Jews, children of the bond-woman, resting in mere external observances, in a form of godliness, as did the Scribes and Pharisees of old.

From what hath been discoursed, I hope the difference between both covenants clearly appears, and that the gospel was not brought in only to hold forth a new platform and model of religion; it was not brought in only to refine some notions of truth, that might seem disfigured by a multitude of legal rites and ceremonies; it was not to cast our opinions concerning the way of life and happiness only into a new mould. It is not so much a system of saving divinity, but the spirit and vital influx of it spreading itself over all the powers of men's souls. It is not so properly a doctrine that is wrapped upon ink and paper, as it is a living impression made up in the soul and spirit. We may in a true sense be as legal as ever the Jews were, if we converse with the gospel as a thing only without us; and be as far short of the righteousness of God as they were, if we make the righteousness which is of Christ by faith to serve us only as an outward covering, and endeavour not after an internal transformation of our minds and souls into it. The

evangelical dispensation doth not therefore please God so much more than the legal, because, as a finer contrivance of his infinite understanding, it more clearly discovers the way of salvation to men ; but chiefly because it is a more powerful efflux of his Divine goodness upon them, as being the true seed of a happy immortality continually thriving and growing on to perfection. I shall add, the gospel does not hold forth such a transcendent advantage above what the law did, only because it acquaints us that Christ, our true High Priest, is ascended up into the holy of holies, and there, instead of the blood of bulls and goats, hath sprinkled the ark and mercy-seat above with his own blood ; but also because it conveys that blood of sprinkling into our defiled consciences, to purge them from dead works. Far be it from me to disparage in the least the merit of Christ's blood, his becoming obedient unto death, whereby we are justified. But I doubt, sometimes, some of our notions about justification may puff us up in far higher conceits of ourselves than God hath of us ; and that we profanely make the unspotted righteousness of Christ serve only as a covering to wrap our filthy vices in ; and when we have done, think ourselves in as good credit with God as we are with ourselves, and that we are become heaven's darlings as much as we are our own. I doubt not that the merit and obedience of our Saviour gain us favour with God, and bring down the benign influences of heaven upon us : but yet I think we may sometimes be too lavish and wanton in our imaginations, in fondly conceiting a greater change in the esteem which God hath of us than becomes us, and too little reckon upon the real and vital emanations of his favour upon us.

Therefore, for the further clearing of what hath been already said, and laying a ground upon which the next part of our discourse, (viz. concerning the conveyance of this God-like righteousness to us by faith,) is to proceed, we shall here speak something more to the business of justification and Divine acceptance.

CHAP. V.

Two Propositions for the better understanding of the Doctrine of Justification and Divine Acceptance.

1st Prop. That the Divine Estimation of every Thing is according to Truth ; and God's Acceptance or Dis-acceptance of Things is suitable to his Judgment. On what Account St. James does attribute a kind of Justification to good Works. 2d Prop. God's justifying of Sinners in pardoning their Sins carries in it a necessary Reference to the sanctifying of their Natures.

OUR first proposition is this ; “ The Divine judgment and estimation of every thing is according to the truth of the thing ; and God’s acceptance or dis-acceptance of things is suitable to his judgment.” Thus St. Peter plainly tells us, Acts x. “ God is no respecter of persons ; but every one that worketh righteousness is accepted of him.” And God himself posed Cain (who had entertained those ungrounded suspicions of his partiality,) with that question, “ If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ?” Wheresoever God finds any impressions of goodness, he likes and approves them, knowing them well to be his own image and superscription. Wherever he sees his own image shining in the souls of men, and a conformity of life to that eternal goodness, which is himself, he loves it and takes a complacency in it, as that which is from himself, and is a true imitation of him. And as his own unbounded being and goodness is the primary and original object of his immense and almighty love ; so every thing that partakes of him, partakes proportionably of his love ; all imitations of him, and participations of his love and goodness, are perpetually adequate the one to the other. By so much the more acceptable any one is to God, by how much the more he resembles God. That Divine light and goodness which flows forth from God, the original of all, upon the souls

of men, never goes solitary and destitute of love, complacency, and acceptation, which is always lodged together with it in the Divine essence. And as the Divine complacency thus dearly and tenderly entertains all those which bear a similitude of true goodness upon them ; so it always abandons from its embraces all evil, which never doth nor can mix with it. The Holy Spirit can never suffer any unhallowed or defiled thing to unite itself with it. Therefore, in a sober sense, I hope I may truly say, there is no perfect reconciliation wrought between God and the souls of men, while any impure thing dwells within the soul, which cannot truly close with God, nor God with that. The Divine love, according to those degrees by which it works upon the souls of men in transforming them into its own likeness, renders them more acceptable to itself, mingleth itself with and uniteth itself to them : as the spirit of any thing mixeth itself more or less with any matter it acts upon, according as it works itself into it, and so makes a passage open for itself.

Upon this account I suppose it may be that St. James attributes a kind of justification to good works, which unquestionably are things that God approves and accepts, and all those in whom he finds them, as seeing there a true conformity to his own goodness and holiness. Whereas, on the other side, he disparageth that barren, sluggish, and drowsy belief, that lazy lethargy in religion, in reference to acceptation with God. I suppose I may fairly thus comment on his whole discourse upon this argument : God respects not a bold, confident, and audacious faith, that is big with nothing but its own presumption. It is not because our brains swim with a strong conceit of God's eternal love to us, or because we grow big and swell into a mighty bulk with airy fancies of our acceptance with God, that makes us any the more acceptable to him. It is not all our strong dreams of being in favour with heaven that fill our hungry souls the more with it. It is not a pertinacious imagination of

our names being enrolled in the book of life, or of the debt-books of heaven being crossed, or of Christ being ours, while we find him not living within us, or of the washing away of our sins in his blood, while the filthy stains thereof are deeply sunk in our own souls ; it is not, I say, a pertinacious imagination of any of these that can make us in any degree better. And a mere conceit or opinion, as it makes us never the better in reality within ourselves ; so it cannot render us ever the more acceptable to God, who judges of all things as they are. No, it must be a true compliance with the Divine will which must render us such as the Divinity may take pleasure in. “ In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing,” (nor any fancy built upon any other external privilege,) “ but the keeping of the commandments of God.” No, but “ if any man do the will of God, him will both the Father and the Son love ; they will come in to him, and make their abode with him.” This is the scope and mark which a true heaven-born faith aims at ; and when it hath attained this end, then is it indeed perfect and complete in its last accomplishment. And the more ardently faith levels at this mark of inward goodness and Divine activity, the more perfect and sincere it is. This is that which God justifies, it being just and correspondent to his own good pleasure. And in whomsoever he finds this, both it and they are accepted of him. And so I come to the second particular.

God’s justifying of sinners, in pardoning and remitting their sins, carries in it a necessary reference to the sanctifying of their natures ; without which justification would rather be a glorious name than a real privilege to the souls of men. While men continue in their wickedness, they do but vainly dream of a device to tie the hands of an almighty vengeance from seizing on them. No, their own sins, like so many armed giants, will, first or last, set upon them, and rend them with inward torment. There needs no angry cherub with a flaming sword drawn

out every way to keep their unhallowed hands off from the tree of life. No, their prodigious lusts, like so many arrows in their sides, would chase them; their own hellish natures would sink them low enough into eternal death, and chain them up fast enough in fetters of darkness among the fiends of hell. Sin will always be miserable, and the sinner at last, when the empty bladders of all those hopes of an airy worldly happiness, that did bear him up in this life, shall be cut, will find it like a talent of lead weighing him down into the bottomless gulf of misery. If all were clear towards heaven, we should find sin raising storms in our own souls. We cannot carry fire in our bosoms, and yet not be burnt. Though we could suppose the greatest serenity without us, if we could suppose ourselves never so much to be at truce with heaven, and all Divine displeasure laid asleep; yet would our own sins, if they continue unmortified, first or last, make an *Aetna* or *Vesuvius* within us. Nay, those sun-beams of eternal truth, that by us are detained in unrighteousness, would at last in those hellish vaults of vice and darkness that are within us, kindle into an unquenchable fire. It would be of small benefit to us that Christ hath triumphed over the principalities and powers of darkness without us, while hell and death, strongly immured in a fort of our own sins and corruptions, should tyrannize within us: that his blood should speak peace in heaven, if, in the mean while, our own lusts were perpetually warring and fighting in and against our souls: that he hath taken off our guilt, and cancelled that hand-writing that was against us, which bound us over to eternal condemnation; if for all this we continue fast sealed up in the hellish dungeon of our own filthy lusts. Indeed we could not expect any relief from heaven out of that misery under which we lie, were not God's displeasure against us first pacified, and our sins remitted. But should the Divine clemency stoop no lower to us than to a mere pardon of our sins and an abstract justification, we should never rise out of

that misery under which we lie. This is the signal and transcendent benefit of our free justification through the blood of Christ, that God's offence justly conceived against us for our sins (which would have been an eternal bar to the efflux of his grace upon us,) being taken off, the Divine grace and bounty may freely flow forth upon us. The fountain of the Divine grace and love is now unlocked and opened, which our sins had shut up ; and now the streams of holiness from thence freely flow forth into all gasping souls. The warm sun of the Divine love, whenever it breaks through and scatters the thick clouds of our iniquities that had separated between God and us, immediately breaks forth upon us with healing in its wings ; it exerciseth the mighty force of its own light and heat upon our dark and benumbed souls, begetting in them a lively sense of God, and kindling into sparks of Divine goodness within us. This love, when once it hath chased away the thick mist of our sins, will be “ strong as death upon us, potent as the grave: many waters will not quench it, nor the floods drown it.” If we shut not the windows of our souls against it, it will at last enlighten all those regions of darkness that are within us, and lead our souls to the light of life, blessedness, and immortality. God pardons men's sins out of an eternal design of destroying them ; and whenever the sentence of death is taken off from a sinner, it is at the same time denounced against his sins. God does not bid us be warmed and be filled, and deny us those necessities which our poor starving souls call for. Christ having made peace through the blood of his cross, the heavens shall be no more as iron above us : but we shall receive freely the vital dew of them, the former and the latter rain in their season ; those influences from above, which souls truly sensible of their own misery and imperfection incessantly grasp after, that righteousness of God which drops from above, from the unsealed spring of free goodness, which makes glad the city of God. This is that free love and grace which the souls of good

men so much triumph in : this is that justification which begets in them lively hopes of a happy immortality in the present anticipations ther eof which spring forth from it in this life. And all this is that which we have called sometimes, “ the righteousness of Christ,” sometimes “ the righteousness of God ;” and here, “ the righteousness which is of faith.” In heaven it is a not imputing of sin to the souls of men ; it is a reconciliation of rebellious natures to truth and goodness. In earth it is the lifting up of the light of God’s countenance upon us, which begets a gladsome entertainment in the souls of men, holy and dear reflections, and returns of love ; Divine love to us, as it were by a natural emanation, begetting a reflex love in us towards God, which live and thrive together.

CHAP. VI.

How the Gospel Righteousness is conveyed to us by Faith, made to appear from these two Considerations : 1. The Gospel lays a strong Foundation of a cheerful Dependance upon the Grace and Love of God in it. 2. A true evangelical Faith is no lazy or languid Thing, but implies an ardent thirsting after Divine Grace and Righteousness, “ The mighty Power of a living Faith in the Love and Goodness of God.”

WE come now to shew the way by which this gospel righteousness is conveyed to us ; and that is by faith. This is that powerful attractive, which, by a strong and Divine sympathy, draws down the virtue of heaven into the souls of men, which strongly and forcibly moves the souls of good men into a conjunction with that Divine goodness by which it lives and grows. This is that Divine impress that invincibly draws and sucks them in by degrees into the Divinity, and so unites them more and more to the centre of life and love. It is something in the hearts of men, which feeling, by an inward sensation, the mighty insinuations of Divine goodness, immediately

complies with it, and with the greatest ardency is perpetually rising up into conjunction with it; being first begotten and enlivened by the warm beams of that goodness, it always breathes and gasps after it for its constant growth and nourishment. It is then fullest of life when it partakes most freely of it, and perpetually languisheth when it is in any measure deprived of that sweet and pure nourishment it derives from it.

But that we may the more clearly unfold how gospel righteousness comes to be communicated through faith, we shall lay it forth in two particulars :

First, The gospel lays a strong foundation of a cheerful dependance upon the grace and love of God. We have the greatest security that may be given us of God's readiness to relieve such forlorn creatures as we are ; that there are no such dreadful fates in heaven as are continually thirsting after the blood of sinners, insatiably greedy after their prey, never satisfied till they have devoured the souls of men. Lest we should by such dreadful apprehensions be driven from God, we are told of that " blood of sprinkling that speaks better things for us ; of a mighty Favourite soliciting our cause with perpetual intercessions in the court of heaven ; of "a new and living way" to the throne of grace, and to the holy of holies, which our Saviour hath "consecrated through his flesh." We are told of a great and mighty Saviour, "able to save to the utmost all that come to God by him." We hear of the most compassionate and tender promises from the truth itself, that, " Whosoever comes to him he will in no wise cast out :" that " They that believe on him, out of them shall flow streams of living water." We hear of the most gracious invitations that heaven can make to "all weary and heavy laden sinners" to come to Christ, that they may find rest. The great secrets of heaven and of Divine counsels are revealed, whereby we are acquainted that "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men," are sweetly joined together, in heaven's harmony, and happily combined

together in the composure of its ditties ; that the glory of the Deity and salvation of men are not allayed by their union one with another, but both exalted together in the most transcendent way, that Divine love and bounty are the supreme rules in heaven and earth, *καὶ φιλος, εἰς
ισαται τε χριστον*. There is no such thing as sour despite and envy lodged in the bosom of that ever-blessed Being above, whose name is Love, and all whose dispensations to the sons of men are but the dispreadings and distended radiations of his love, as freely flowing forth from it, through the whole sphere of creation as the bright light from the sun in the firmament, of whose benign influences we are then only deprived when we hide and withdraw ourselves from them. We are taught the mild and gentle breathings of the Divine Spirit are moving up and down in the world to produce life, and to revive and quicken the souls of men into a feeling sense of a blessed immortality. This is that mighty Spirit that will, if we comply with it, “teach us all things,” even the hidden things of God ; mortify all the lusts of rebellious flesh, and “seal us to the day of redemption.”

We are taught that with all holy boldness we may “in all places lift up holy hands to God, without wrath or doubting,” without any sour thoughts of God, or fretful jealousies, or harsh surmises. We can never enough distrust ourselves, nor ever trust too much in God. This is that full confidence which the gospel every where seems to promote. And should I run through all the arguments and solicitations that are there laid down, to provoke us to it, I should run quite through it from one end to another, it containing almost nothing else but strong and forcible motives to all ingenuous addresses to God, and the most effectual encouragement that may be to all cheerful dependance on him, and confident expectation of all assistance from him, to carry on our poor endeavours to the achievement of blessedness, and that in the most plain and simple way that may be, *sine fraude et fupo*, without any double mind or mental reservation ; heaven is not acquainted so feel-

ingly with our wicked arts and devices. But it is very strange that where God writes life so plainly in fair capital letters, we are so apt to read death ; that when he tells us, over and over, that hell and destruction arise from ourselves, that they are the workmanship of our own hands, we will needs understand their pedigree to be from heaven, and that they were conceived in the womb of life and blessedness. No ; but the gospel tells us we are not come to “mounts of burning, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,” &c. Heb. xii. 18. Certainly a lively faith in this love of God, and a sober converse with his goodness by a cordial entertainment and thorough persuasion of it, would warm our benumbed minds, and thaw our hearts frozen with self-love ; it would make us melt and dissolve out of all self-confidence, and by a free and noble sympathy with the Divine love, yield up ourselves to it, and dilate and spread ourselves more fully in it. This would banish all atheism and slavish superstition ; it would cast down every high thought and proud imagination that swells within us, and exalts itself against this sovereign Deity ; it would free us from all those poor, pinching, and particular loves that enthrall the soul to vanity and baseness ; it would lead us into the true liberty of the sons of God, filling our hearts with a more generous and universal love, as unbounded as true goodness itself. Thus, Moses-like, conversing with God in the mount, and there beholding his glory shining upon us in the face of Christ, we should be deriving a copy of that eternal beauty upon our own souls, and our thirsty and hungry spirits would be perpetually sucking in a true participation and image of his glory. A true Divine love would wing our souls, and make them take their flight swiftly towards heaven and immortality. Could we once be thoroughly possessed and mastered with a full confidence of the Divine love, and God’s readiness to assist such feeble, languishing creatures as we are, in our assay after heaven and blessedness, we should then, finding ourselves borne up by an Almighty strength, ad-

venture courageously and confidently upon the highest designs of happiness, to assail the kingdom of heaven with a holy violence, to pursue a course of well-doing without weariness ; knowing that our labour would not be in vain in the Lord, and that we should receive our reward, if we faint not. We should work out our salvation in the most industrious manner, trusting in God as one ready to instil strength and power into all the faculties of our souls ; we should “ press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ, that we might apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus.” If we suffer not ourselves to be robbed of this confidence in God as ready to accomplish the desires of those that seek after him, we may then walk on strongly in the way to heaven and not be weary ; we may run and not faint. And the more the souls of men grow in this blissful persuasion, the more they shall mount up like eagles into a clear heaven, finding themselves rising higher and higher above all those filthy mists, those clouds and tempests of a slavish fear, despair, fretfulness against God, pale jealousies, wrathful and embittered thoughts of him, or any strugglings or contests to get from within the verge of his power and omniscience, which would mantle up the souls in black and horrid night.

I mean not all this while by this holy boldness and confidence in a believer’s converse with the Deity, that high pitch of assurance that wafts the souls of good men over the lake of death, and brings them to the borders of life ; that here puts them into an actual possession of bliss, and re-instates and re-establishes them in paradise. No ; that more general acquaintance which we may have with God’s philanthropy and bounty, ready to relieve with the bowels of his tender compassions all those starving souls that call upon him, for surely he will never do less for fainting and drooping souls, than he doth for the young ravens that cry unto him ; that converse which we are provoked by the gospel to maintain with God’s unconfined love, if we understand it aright, will awaken us out of our drowsy

Lethargy, and make us “ask of him the way to Sion, with our faces thitherward.” This will be digging up fresh fountains for us while we go through the valley of Baca, whereby refreshing our weary souls, we shall “go on from strength to strength,” until we see the face of our loving and ever-to-be-loved God in Sion. And so I come to the next particular wherein we shall further unfold how this God-like righteousness, we have spoken of, is conveyed to us by faith ; and that is this :—

A true gospel faith is no lazy or languid thing, but implies a strong ardent breathing for, and thirsting after, Divine grace and righteousness. It doth not only pursue an ambitious project of raising the soul immaturely to the condition of a darling favourite with heaven, while it is unripe for it, by procuring a mere empty pardon for sin ; it desires not only to stand upon clear terms with heaven by procuring the crossing of all the debt-books of our sins there ; but it rather pursues after “an internal participation of the Divine nature.” We often hear of a saving faith ; and that, where it is, is not content to wait for salvation till the world to come ; it is not patient of being an expectant probationer for it until this earthly body resigns its worldly interest, that so the soul might then come into its room. No ; but it is here perpetually gasping after it, and effecting it in a way of serious mortification and self-denial. It enlarges and dilates itself as much as may be, according to the vast dimensions of the Divine love, that it may comprehend “the height and depth, the length and breadth” thereof, and fill the soul where it is seated, “with all the fulness of God.” It breeds a strong and insatiable appetite, where it comes, after true goodness. Were I to describe it, I should do it no otherwise than in the language of the apostle : It is that whereby “we live in Christ, and” whereby “he lives in us ;” or, in the dialect of our Saviour himself, something so powerfully sucking in the precious influences of the Divine Spirit, that the soul where it is, is continually flowing with living waters issuing out of itself.

A truly believing soul, by an ingenuous affiance in God, and an eager thirst after him, is always sucking from the full breasts of the Divine love; thence it will not part; for there, and there only, is its life and nourishment; it starves and faints away with grief and hunger whensoever it is pulled away from thence; it is perpetually hanging upon the arms of immortal goodness, for there it finds its great strength lies; and as much as may be arms itself with the mighty power of God, by which it goes forth like a giant refreshed with wine, to run that race of grace and holiness that leads to that heavenly Canaan. And whensoever it finds itself enfeebled in its difficult conflict with those fierce and furious corruptions, those tall sons of Anak, which, arising from our sensual affections, encounter it in the wilderness of this world; then, turning itself to God, and putting itself under the conduct of the angel of his presence, it finds itself presently out of weakness to become strong, enabled from above to put to flight those mighty armies of the aliens. True faith (if you would know its rise and pedigree,) is begotten of the Divine bounty and fulness manifesting itself to the spirits of men, and is conceived and brought forth by a deep sense of self-indigency and poverty. Faith arises out of self-inanition, placing itself in view of the Divine all-sufficiency; and thus (that I may borrow those words of St. Paul,) "we receive the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in him." The more this sensual, brutish, and self-central life thrives and prospers, the more Divine faith languisheth; and the more that decays, and all self-love and self-sufficiency pine away, the more is true faith fed and nourished, it grows more vigorous. And as carnal life wastes and consumes, so does faith suck in a true Divine and spiritual life from him who hath life in himself, and freely bestows it to all those that heartily seek it. When the Divinity united itself to human nature in the person of our Saviour, he then gave mankind a pledge and earnest of what he would further do therein, in assuming

it into as near a conjunction as might be with himself, and in communicating himself to man in a way as far correspondent and agreeable as might be to that first copy. And therefore we are told of “Christ being formed in us,” and “the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us; of our being made conformable to him; of having fellowship with him; of being as he was in this world; of living in him, and his living in us; of dying and rising again, and ascending with him into heaven,” and the like. Because the same Spirit that dwelt in him, derives itself in its mighty energy through all believing souls, shaping them more and more into a just resemblance and conformity to him as the first copy and pattern. Whence it is that we have so many ways of unfolding the union between Christ and all believers set forth in the gospel. And all this is done for us by degrees, through the efficacy of the eternal Spirit, when by a true faith we deny ourselves and our own wills; submit ourselves, in a deep sense of our own folly and weakness, to his wisdom and power, when we comply with his will, and by a holy affiance in him subordinate ourselves to his pleasure: for these are the vital acts of a gospel faith.

According to this which hath been said, I suppose we may fairly understand St. Paul’s discourses, which so much prefer faith above works. We must not think, in a giant-like pride, to scale the walls of heaven by our own works, and by force thereof to take the strong fort of blessedness, and wrest the crown of glory out of God’s hands, whether he will or not. We must not think to commence a suit in heaven for happiness upon such a poor plea as our external compliance with the old law. We must not think to deal with God in the method of commutative justice, and to challenge eternal life as the just reward of our merits, and the hire due to us for our labour and toil in God’s vineyard. No; “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” It must be an humble and self-denying address of a soul dissolved into a deep and piercing sense of its own nothingness and unprofitableness, that can be

capable of the Divine bounty. “ He fills the hungry with good things, but the rich he sends empty away.” They are the hungry and thirsty souls, always gasping after the living springs of Divine grace, as the parched ground in the desert doth for the dew of heaven, ready to drink them in by a constant dependance upon God ; souls that by a living, watchful, and diligent faith, spreading forth themselves in all obsequious reverence and love of him, wait on him as the eyes of a handmaid wait on the hand of her mistress. These are they that he delights to satiate with his goodness. Those that, being mastered by a strong sense of their own indigency, their pressing poverty and his all-sufficient fulness, trust in him as an almighty Saviour, and in the most ardent manner pursue after that perfection which his grace is leading them to ; those that cannot satisfy themselves in a bare performance of external acts of righteousness, or an external observance of a law without them ; but with the most fervent ambition pursue after such an acquaintance with his Divine Spirit as may breathe an inward life through all the powers of their souls. These are the spiritual seed of faithful Abraham, the sons of the free-woman, and heirs of the promises, to whom all are made “ yea and amen in Christ Jesus.” These are they which shall abide in the house for ever, when the sons of the bond-woman shall be cast out.

CHAP. VII.

How the whole Undertaking of Christ is eminently available both to give full Ease to our Hearts, and also to encourage us to Godliness, or a God-like Righteousness.

For the further illustration of some things in the latter part of this discourse, it may not be amiss, in some particulars (which might be easily enlarged,) to shew how the undertaking of Christ (that great object of faith,) is greatly advantageous, and available to the giving full

relief and ease to our hearts, and also to the encouraging us to godliness, or a true God-like righteousness.

In the general, therefore, we may consider, that full and evident assurance is given hereby to the world, “ That God doth indeed seek the saving of that which is lost ;” and men are no longer to make any doubt or scruple of it. Now what can we imagine more available to carry on a design of godliness, and to rouse dull and languid souls to an effectual minding of their own salvation, than to have this news sounding in their ears by men that, (at the first promulgation thereof,) durst tell them roundly, in the name of God, That God required them every where to repent, for that his kingdom of grace was now apparent ; and that he was not only willing, but it was his gracious design to save lost sinners, who had forsaken his goodness ?

Particularly, that the whole business of Christ is very advantageous for this purpose, may appear thus :

1. We are fully assured that God hath this design upon lost men, because here is one, (viz. Christ,) that partakes every way of human nature, whom the Divinity magnifies itself in, and carries through this world in human infirmities and sufferings to eternal glory : a clear manifestation to the world that God had not cast off human nature, but had a real mind to exalt and dignify it again.

2. The way into the holy of holies, or to eternal happiness, is laid as open as may be by Christ, in his doctrine, life, and death : in all which we may see with open face what human nature may attain to, and how it may, by humility, self-denial, and Divine love, a Christ-like life, rise up above all visible heavens into a state of immortal glory.

3. Here is a manifestation of love given, enough to thaw all the iciness of men’s hearts, which self-love had frozen up. For here is One who in human nature, every where denying himself, is ready to do any thing for the good of mankind, and at last gives up his life for the same purpose ; and that according to the good-will and plea-

sure of that eternal love which “so loved the world, that he gave this his beloved and only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

4. Whereas every penitent sinner, that carries a sense of guilt upon his own conscience, is apt to shrink with cold chill fears of offended Majesty, and to dread the thoughts of violated justice: he is assured that Christ hath laid down his life, and thereby made atonement for sin; that he hath laid down his life for the redemption of him; and so “in Christ we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin.” Thus may the hearts of all penitents troubled with a sense of their own guilt, be quieted, and fully established in a living faith, in an eternal goodness; seeing their sins are remitted through the blood of Jesus, that came to die for them and save them, and through his blood they may have free access unto God.

5. Seeing sin and guilt are apt continually to beget a jealousy of God’s majesty and greatness, from whom the sinner finds himself at a vast distance, he is made acquainted with a Mediator, through whom he may address himself to God without this jealousy or doubting; for that this Mediator likewise is one of human nature, that is highly beloved of God, he having so highly pleased God by performing his will in all things. Certainly it is much for the ease of a penitent’s mind, that our addresses to God should be through a Mediator. Seeing between the pure Divinity and impure sinners as there is no union, so no communion; it is very agreeable, upon all accounts, that they, who in themselves are altogether unworthy, should come to God by a Mediator.

Thus the Scriptures every where represent Christ in the fore-named particulars, (without descending into niceties and subtleties, such as the school-men and others from them have troubled the world with,) in a very full and ample manner, that so the minds of true believers (that are willing to comply with the purpose of God for

their own eternal peace,) might in all cases find something in Christ for their relief, and make use of him as much as may be to encourage and help on godliness. For by this whole undertaking of Christ manifested in the gospel, God would have to be understood “full relief of mind and ease of conscience,” as also “all encouragement to Godliness;” and “disparagement of sin.” And, indeed, the whole business of Christ is the greatest blow to sin that may be; for the world is taught hereby, that there is no sinning upon easy terms. Men may see that God will not return so easily into favour with sinners; but he will have his righteousness acknowledged, and likewise their own demerit. And this acknowledgment he is once indeed pleased to accept of in the person of our Saviour; yet if men will not now turn to him, and accept his favour, they must know that there is no other sacrifice for sin.

By these particulars (to name no more,) it may appear, That when we look into the gospel, we are taught to believe that Christ hath done, according to the good pleasure of God, every thing for us that may truly relieve our minds, and encourage us to godliness; a God-like righteousness far exceeding the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

THE
SHORTNESS AND VANITY
OF A
PHARISAIC RIGHTEOUSNESS,
DISCOVERED

IN A DISCOURSE UPON MATT. xix. 20, 21.

“ The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus saith unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. And come and follow me.”

CHAP. I.

A general Account of Men's Mistakes about Religion. Men are no where more apt to delude themselves, than in Matters of Religion. The Religion of most Men is but an Image and Resemblance of their own Fancies. The Method propounded for discoursing upon those Words. 1. To discover some of the Mistakes about Religion. 2. The Reason of these Mistakes.

AS there is no kind of excellency more generally pretended to than religion, so there is none less known, or wherein men are more apt to delude themselves. Every one is ready to lay claim, and to plead a right in it; (like the bat in the Jewish fable, that pretended the light was hers, and complained of the unjust detainment thereof from her) but few there are that understand the true worth and preciousness of it. There are some common

notions in the minds of men, which are ever and anon roving after religion ; and as they casually start up any models of it, they are presently prone to believe themselves to have found this pearl of price : the religion of most men being nothing else but such a scheme of thoughts and actions, as their natural propensions, swayed by nothing but an inbred belief of a Deity, accidentally run into ; nothing else but an image and resemblance of their own fancies which are ever busy in painting out themselves ; which is the reason why there are as many shapes of religion in the minds of men, as there are various shapes of faces and fancies. Thus men are wont to fashion their religion to themselves in a strange and uncouth manner, as the imaginations of men in their dreams are wont to represent monstrous shapes that nowhere appear but there. And though some may seem to themselves to have ascended up above this low region, this vulgar state of religion ; yet I doubt they may still be wrapped in clouds and darkness, they may still be but in a middle region, like wandering meteors that have not yet shaken off that earthly nature which will at last force them again downwards. There may be some who arrive at that book-learning in Divine mysteries, that with a pharisaic pride looking down upon the vulgar sort of men, may say, " This people that know not the law are cursed ;" who themselves converse only with a shadow of religion. Though the light of Divine truth may seem to shine upon them, yet by reason of their dark hearts, it shines not into them. They may, like this dark and dull earth, be superficially gilded, and warmed too with its beams, and yet the impressions thereof do not pierce quite through them. There may be many fair semblances of religion where the substance of it is not. We shall here endeavour to discover some of them which may seem most specious, and with which the weak understandings of men (which are no where more lazy than in matters of religion) are most apt to be deluded ; and then discover the reason of these mistakes.

For which purpose we have made choice of these words, wherein we find a young pharisce beginning to swell with a vain conceit of his good estate towards God, looking upon himself as being already upon the borders of perfection, having from his youth up kept in the way of God's commandments ; he could not now be many miles from the land of Canaan. If he were not already passed over Jordan, he thought himself to be already in a state of perfection, or at least within sight of it : and therefore making account he was as lovely in our Saviour's eyes as he was in his own, asks him, " What lack I yet ? "

As if he had said, Having kept all God's commandments, sure my good deeds not only overbalance my evil, no, but they rather fill both the scales of the Divine balance ; I have no evil deeds to weigh against them : what therefore can I want of the end of the Divine law, which is to make men perfect ? To which our Saviour replies, " If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come and follow me." Which words I cannot think to be only a particular precept ; but rather by way of conviction. So that the full sense of our Saviour's speech seems to be this ; " A mere conformity of the outward man to the law of God is not sufficient to bring a man to eternal life ; but the inward man also must deeply receive the impression of the Divine law." True perfection is not consistent with any worldly affections. The spirit which acts so strongly in this lower world must be crucified. The soul must be wholly dissolved from this earthy body which it is so deeply immersed in, while it endeavours to enlarge its sorry tabernacle upon this material globe, and by a holy abstraction from all things that pinion it to mortality, withdraw itself and retire into a Divine solitude. If thou therefore wert in a state of perfection, thou wouldest be able at the first call from God to resign up all interest here below, to quit all claim, and to dispose of thyself and all worldly enjoyments according to his pleasure, without any reluctance, " and come and

follow me." And this I think was the true scope of our Saviour's answer; which proved a real demonstration; as it appears in the sequel of the story, that this confident pharisee had not yet attained to those mortified affections which are requisite in all the candidates of true blessedness; but only cheated his own soul with a bare external appearance of religion, which was not truly seated in his heart: and I doubt not that many are ready upon as slight grounds, to take up his query, "What lack I yet?"

We shall therefore in the first place inquire into some of those false pretences which men are apt to make to happiness.

CHAP. II.

An Account of Mistakes about Religion in four Particulars. 1. *A partial Obedience to some particular Precepts. Where the true Spirit of Religion is, it informs and actuates the whole Man, it will not be confined, but will be absolute within us, and not suffer any corrupt Interest to grow by it.*

THE first is, "A partial obedience to some particular precepts of God's law." That arrogant pharisee that could lift up a bold face to heaven, and thank God he was no extortioner, nor unjust, nor guilty of any publicans-sins, found it easy to persuade himself that God justified him as much as he did himself.

It was a rule given by the Jewish doctors, which I fear too many live by, "That men should single some one commandment out of God's law, and therein especially exercise themselves, that so they might make God their friend by that, lest in others they should too much displease him." Thus men are content to pay God the tenths of their lives too, so that they may without fear of sacrilege, or purloining from him, enjoy all the rest to themselves. For they are not willing to consecrate their

whole lives to him, they are afraid lest religion should encroach too much upon them, and too busily invade their own rights and liberties, as their selfish spirit calls them.

There are such as think themselves willing God should have his due, so he will let them enjoy their own without any let or molestation ; but they are very jealous lest he should encroach too much upon them, and are careful to set bounds to God's prerogative over them, lest it should swell too much, and grow too mighty for them to maintain their own privileges under it. They would fain understand themselves to be free-born under the dominion of God himself, and therefore ought not to be compelled to yield obedience to any such laws of his as their own private lusts and passions will not suffer them to give consent to.

There are those who persuade themselves they are well-affected to God, and willing to obey his commandments, but yet think they must not be uncivil to the world ; nor so base and cowardly as not to maintain their reputation, with a due revenge upon those that impair it. Such as these can easily find some postern-door to slip out by into this world : and while they either do some constant homage to heaven in the performance of some duties of religion, or abstain from such vices as the common opinions of men brand with infamy, or fancy themselves to have some of those characters which they have learned from books or pulpit-discourses to be the notes of God's children and justified persons, grow big with self-conceit, and easily find some handsome piece of sophistry to delude themselves by, in indulging a beloved lust. They can beat down the price of other men's religion, to enhance the value of their own ; or it may be by a fiery zeal against others that are not of their sect, they lose the sense of all their own guiltiness. The disciples themselves had almost forgotten the mild and gentle spirit of religion, in an over-hasty heat calling for fire from heaven upon those whom they deemed their master's enemies.

Sometimes a partial spirit in religion, that spends itself only in some particulars, mistakes the fair complexions of good-nature for the true face of virtue ; and a good bodily temperament will serve, as a flattering glass, to bestow beauty upon a mishapen mind. But it is not a true spirit of religion that is thus particular and confined. No, that is of a subtle and working nature ; it will be searching through the whole man, and leave nothing uninformed by itself : as it is with the soul that runs through every member of the body. Sin and grace cannot lodge together, they cannot divide between them two several dominions in one soul.

What is commonly said of truth, we may say more especially of goodness, “ It is great, and will prevail.” It will lodge in the souls of men, like that mighty, though gentle, heat which is entertained in the heart, that always dispenseth warm blood and spirits to all the members in the body. It will not suffer any other interest to grow by it. It will be so absolute as to swallow up all our carnal freedom, and crush our fleshly liberty. As Moses’s serpent eat up all the serpents of the magicians, so will it devour all that viperous brood of iniquity, which our magical self-will begets within us. Like a strong and vehement flame, it will not only scorch the skin, but consume this whole body of death. It is compared by our Saviour to leaven, that will ferment the whole mass in which it is wrapped up. It will enter into us like the refiner’s fire and the fuller’s soap ; like the angel of God’s presence that he promised to send along with the Israelites in their journey to Canaan, it will not pardon our iniquities, nor indulge any darling lust whatsoever. It will narrowly pry into all our actions, and be spying out all those back doors whereby sin and vice may enter.

That religion that runs out only in particularities, and is overswayed by the prevailing power of any lust, is but a dead carcass, and not that true living religion which comes from heaven, and which will not suffer itself to be confined ; that will not indent with us, or article upon

our terms, but, Sampson-like, will break all those bonds which our fleshly and harlot-like wills would tie it with, and become every way absolute within us.

CHAP. III.

The second Mistake about Religion, viz. A mere Compliance of the outward Man with the Law of God. True Religion seats itself in the Centre of Men's Souls, and first brings the inward Man into Obedience. The superficial Religion intermeddles chiefly with the Circumference and Outside of Men. Of speculative and spiritual Wickedness. How apt Men are to sink all Religion into Opinions and external Forms.

WHEN religion seats itself in the centre of men's souls, it acts there most strongly upon the vital powers of it, and first brings the inward man into a true and cheerful obedience, before all the external be quite subdued. But a superficial religion many times intermeddles only with the circumference and outside of men; it only lodges in the suburbs, and storms the outworks, but enters not the main fort of men's souls, which is strongly defended by inward pride, self-will, particular and worldly loves, fretting and self-consuming envy, popularity, and vain glory, and such other mental vices, that when they are beaten out of the conversations of men by Divine threats or promises, retreat and secure themselves here as in a strong castle. They may be many who dare not pursue revenge, and yet are not willing to forgive injuries; who dare not murder their enemy, that yet cannot love him; who dare not seek for preferment by bribery, who yet are not mortified to these and other base affections. They are not willing that the Divine prerogative should extend itself beyond the outward man, and that religion should be too busy with their inward thoughts and passions. If they may not by proud boasting set off their

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own sorry commodities upon the publick stage ; yet they will inwardly applaud themselves, and commit wanton dalliance with their own parts and perfections ; not feeling the mighty power of any higher good, they will endeavour to preserve an unhallowed sense of themselves ; by a sullen stoicism ; when religion bereaves them of the glory and pleasures of this outward world, they retire and shrink themselves up into a centre of their own. When external loves begin to cool, men may fall in love with themselves by arrogance, self-confidence and dependence, self-applause and gratulations, admiration of their own perfections ; and so feed that dying life of theirs with this speculative wantonness, that it may as strongly express itself within them, as before it did without them. Men may thus sacrilegiously steal God's glory from him, and erect a self-supremacy within, and so become corivals with God for the crown of blessedness and self-sufficiency.

But, alas, I doubt we generally arrive not to this pitch of religion, to deny the world, and all the pomp and glory of this largely-extended train of vanity ; but we easily content ourselves with some external forms of religion. We are too apt to be enamoured rather with some more specious and seemingly-spiritual forms, than with the true spirit and power of godliness. We are more taken commonly with the several new fashions that the luxuriant fancies of men are apt to contrive for it, than with the real power and simplicity thereof ; and while we think ourselves to be growing in our knowledge, and moving on towards perfection, we do but turn up and down from one form to another.

I would not be understood to speak against those duties and ordinances which are means appointed by God to promote piety. But I fear we are too apt to sink all our religion into these, and so to embody it, that we may as it were touch and feel it, because we are so little acquainted with the high and spiritual nature of it, which is too subtle for gross minds to converse with. I fear too many look upon such models of divinity, and religious performances,

as were intended to help our dull minds to a more lively sense of God and true goodness, as the whole of religion ; and therefore are apt to think themselves absolved from it, except at some solemn times of more especial addresses to God ; and that this wedding-garment of holy thoughts and Divine affections is not for every day's wearing, but only then to be put on when we come to the marriage-feast and festivals of heaven. As if religion were locked up in some sacred solemnities, and so incorporated into some Divine mysteries, as the superstitious heathen of old thought, that it might not stir abroad and wander too far out of these hallowed cloisters, and grow too busy with us in our secular employments. We have learned to distinguish too subtilly between our religious approaches to God and our worldly affairs. I know our conversation in this world is not, nor can well be, all of a piece, and there will be several degrees of sanctity in the lives of good men, as there were once in the land of Canaan : but yet I think a good man should always find himself upon holy ground, and never depart so far into the affairs of this life, as to be without the compass of religion ; he should always think, wheresoever he is, that God and the blessed angels are there, with whom he should converse in a way of purity. We must not think that religion serves to paint our faces, to reform our looks, or only to inform our heads, or tune our tongues ; no, nor only to tie our hands, and make our outward man more demure, and bring our bodies and bodily actions into a better decorum : but its main business is to purge our hearts, and all the actions and motions thereof.

CHAP. IV

The third Mistake about Religion, viz. A constrained Obedience to God's Commandments. The Religion of many (some of whom seem most abhorrent from Superstition) is nothing but Superstition properly so called. The different Effects of Love and slavish Fear in the truly, and in the falsely religious.

ANOTHER particular wherin men mistake religion, is a constrained obedience to God's commandments. That which many men (amongst whom some would seem to be most abhorrent from superstition) call their religion is indeed nothing but superstition, that I may use the word in its ancient and proper sense, as it imports "such an apprehension of God as renders him grievous to men, and so destroys all free and cheerful converse with him, and begets, instead thereof, a forced and dry devotion, void of inward life and love." Those servile spirits which are not acquainted with God and goodness, may be so haunted by the frightful thoughts of a Deity, as to terrify them into some worship of him. They are apt to look upon him as one clothed with austerity, an hard master; and therefore they think something must be done to please him, and mitigate his severity towards them. And though they cannot truly love him, having no inward sense of his loveliness, yet they cannot but serve him so far as these rigorous apprehensions lie upon them; though notwithstanding such as these are very apt to persuade themselves that they may purchase his favour with some cheap services, as if heaven itself could become guilty of bribery, and immutable justice be flattered into partiality and respect of persons. Because they are not acquainted with God, therefore they are ready to paint him to themselves in their own shape: and because they themselves are full of peevishness and self-will, arbitrarily prescribing to others without sufficient reason, and are easily enticed by flatteries; they are apt to represent the Divinity to themselves in the same form; and therefore, that they might please this angry deity of their own making, they are sometimes lavish in such a kind of service of him as doth not much pinch their own corruptions; nay, and it may be too, will seem to part with them, and give them a weeping farewell, if God and their own awakened consciences frown upon them; though all their obedience arise from nothing but the compulsion which their own sour and dreadful apprehension of God lay upon them. And therefore in those things

which more nearly touch their beloved lusts, they will be as scant and sparing as may be, here they will be strict with God, that he may have no more than his due, as they think ; like that unprofitable servant in the gospel, that, because his master was an austere man, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not scattered, was willing he should have his own again, but would not suffer him to have any more.

This servile spirit in religion is always illiberal and needy in the great and weightier matters of religion, and here weighs out obedience by drachms and scruples ; it never finds itself more shrivelled and shrunk up, than when it is to converse with God ; like those creatures that are generated of slime and mud, the more the summer-sun shines upon them, and the nearer it comes to them, the more is their vital strength dried up and spent. Their dreadful thoughts of God, like a cold eastern wind, blasts all their blossoming affections, and nips them in the bud. These exhaust their native vigour, and make them weak and sluggish in all their motions towards God. Their religion is rather a prison, or a piece of penance to them, than any voluntary and free compliance with the Divine will. And yet, because they bear the burden and heat of the day, they think, when the evening comes, they ought to be more liberally rewarded ; such slavish spirits being over apt to conceit that heaven receives some emolument by their hard labours, and so becomes indebted to them, because they see no true gain and comfort accruing from them to their own souls ; and so because they do God's work, and not their own, they think they may reasonably expect a fair compensation. And this, I doubt, was the first foundation of merit ; though now the world is ashamed to own it.

But, alas, such an ungodlike religion as this can never be owned by God : the bond-woman and her son must be cast out. The spirit of true religion is of a more free, noble, ingenuous, and generous nature, arising out of the warm beams of the Divine love which first brought it

forth, and therefore is it afterwards perpetually bathing itself in that sweetest love that first begot it, and is always refreshed and nourished by it. This love “ casteth out fear, fear which hath torment,” and which therefore is more apt to chase away souls from God, than to allure them to God. Such fear of God always carries in it a secret antipathy against him, as being one that is so troublesome that there is no peaceable living with him. Whereas love, by a strong sympathy, draws the souls of men, when it hath once laid hold upon them, by its powerful insinuation, into the nearest conjunction that may be with the Divinity ; it thaws all those frozen affections which a slavish fear had congealed, and makes the soul most cheerful, free, and nobly resolved in all its motions after God. It was well observed of old by Pythagoras, “ We are never so well as when we approach to God ;” when in a way of religion we make our addresses to God, then are our souls most cheerful. An inward acquaintance with God discovers nothing in him but pure and sincere goodness, nothing that might breed the least distaste or disaffection, or carry in it any semblance of displeasingness ; and therefore the souls of good men are never pinching and sparing in their affections : then the torrent is most full and swells highest, when it empties itself into this unbounded ocean of the Divine Being. This makes all the commandments of God light and easy, and far from being grievous. There needs no law to compel a mind acted by the spirit of Divine love to serve God. It is the choice of such a soul to conform itself to him, and draw from him an imitation of that goodness and perfection which it finds in him. Such a Christian does not therefore obey his commands only because it is God’s will he should do so, but because he sees the law of God to be truly perfect, as David speaks : his nature being reconciled to God finds it all holy, just, and good, as St. Paul speaks, and such a thing as his soul loves, “ sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb ;” and he makes it “ his meat and drink to do the will of God,” as our Lord and Saviour did.

CHAP. V.

The fourth Mistake about Religion, When a mere mechanical and artificial Religion is taken for that which is a true Impression of Heaven upon the Soul. The Difference between those that are governed in their Religion by Fancy, and those that are actuated by the Divine Spirit, and in whom Religion is a living Form. Religion discovers itself best in a serene Temper of Mind, in deep Humility, Meekness, Self-denial, universal Love of God and all true Goodness.

THE fourth and last particular wherin men misjudge themselves, is, "When a mere mechanical and artificial religion is taken for that which is a true impression of heaven upon the souls of men, and which moves like an inward nature." True religion will not stoop to rules of art, nor be confined within the narrow compass thereof: no, where it is, we may cry out with the Greek philosopher, *εἰ τις Θεος ενδον, God is within.* God hath there kindled his own life, which will move only according to the laws of heaven. But there are some mechanical Christians that can fashion religion so cunningly in their own souls by that book-skill they have got of it, that it may many times deceive themselves, as if it were a true living thing. We often hear that mere pretenders to religion may go as far in all the external acts of it as those that are best acquainted with it: I doubt not also that many times there may be artificial imitations drawn of that which only lives in the souls of good men, by the powerful and wily magic of exalted fancies; as we read of some artificers that have made images of living creatures, wherein they have not only drawn forth the outward shape, but seem almost to have copied out the life too in them. Men may make an imitation as well of the internals of religion, as of the externals. There may be a semblance of inward joy in God, of love to him and his

precepts, of dependence upon him, and a filial reverence of him. Those Christians that fetch all their religion from pious books and discourses, hearing of such and such signs of grace, and being taught to believe they must get those, that so they may go to heaven ; may presently set themselves on work, and in an apish imitation cause their animal powers and passions to represent all these ; which may serve for a handsome artifice of religion wherein these mechanics may much applaud themselves.

I doubt not that there may be such who to gain credit with themselves, and that glorious name of being the children of God, (though they know nothing more of it but that it is a title that sounds well) would use their best skill to appear such to themselves, so qualified and moulded as they are told they must be. And as many times credit and reputation among men may make them par off the ruggedness of their outward man, and polish that ; so to gain their own good opinion, and a reputation with their own consciences which look more inwardly, they may also endeavour to make their inward man look more smooth and comely. And it is no hard matter for such chameleon-like Christians to turn even their insides into whatsoever colour shall best please them. Thus may they deceive themselves, and think their religion to be some mighty thing within them, that runs quite through them, and makes all these transformations within them ; whereas a wise observer may see whence it comes and whither it goes : it being indeed a thing which is from the earth, earthy, and not like that true spirit of regeneration which comes from heaven, and begets a Divine life in the souls of good men, and is not under the command of any such charms as these are, neither will it move according to those laws, and times, and measures that we please to set to it : but we shall find it manifesting its mighty supremacy over the highest powers of our souls. Whereas we may truly say of all mechanics in religion, and our mimical Christians, that

“ they are not so much actuated and informed by their religion, as they inform that ;” the power of their own imagination deriving that force to it which bears it up, and guides all its motions and operations. And therefore they themselves having the power over it, can new mould it as themselves please, according to any new pattern which shall please them better than the former : they can furnish this domestic scene of theirs with any kind of matter which the history of other men’s religion may afford them ; and if need be, act over all the experiences of that sect of men to which they most addict themselves so to the life, that they may seem to themselves as well experienced Christians as any others ; and so, it may be, soar aloft in self-conceit, as if they had already made their nests among the stars, and had viewed their own mansion in heaven.

But besides, there are such things in our Christian religion as may seem delicious even to the fleshly appetites of men. Some doctrines and notions of free grace and justifications ; the magnificent titles of sons of God and heirs of heaven ; ever-flowing streams of joy and pleasure that blessed souls shall swim in to all eternity ; a glorious paradise in the world to come, always springing up with fragrant beauties ; a new Jerusalem paved with gold, and bespangled with stars, comprehending in its vast circuit such numberless varieties, that a busy curiosity may spread itself about to all eternity. I doubt not but that sometimes the most earthly men may be so ravished with the conceits of such things as these, that they may seem to be made partakers of “ the powers of the world to come :” yea, and to have obtained higher degrees than those noble Christians that are gently moved by the natural force of true goodness. And as the motions of our sense, fancy, and passions, while our souls are in this mortal condition, are many times more vigorous than those of the higher powers of the soul, which are more remote from these mixed and animal perceptions ; that devotion which is there seated may seem to

have more energy and life in it than that which gently, and with a more delicate kind of touch, spreads itself upon the understanding, and from thence mildly derives itself through our wills and affections. But, howsoever the former may be more boisterous for a time, yet this is of a more consistent and thriving nature: for that is but of a flitting and fading nature. But a true celestial warmth will never be extinguished; being once seated vitally in the souls of men, it will regulate all the motions of them in a due manner, as the natural heat in the hearts of living creatures hath the dominion of the whole body under it, and sends forth warm blood and spirits, and vital nourishment to every part and member of it. True religion is no piece of artifice; it is no boiling up of our imagination, nor the glowing heat of passion; these are too often mistaken for it, when we cast a mist before our own eyes: but it is a new nature informing the souls of men; it is a god-like frame of spirit, discovering itself most in serene and clear minds, in deep humility, meekness, self-denial, universal love of God, and all true goodness, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; whereby we are taught to know God, and knowing him to love him, and conform ourselves, as much as may be, to all that perfection which shines in him.

[Thus far the first part of this Discourse, which was designed to give a particular account of men's mistakes about religion. The other part was intended to discover the reason of the mistakes. But whether the author finished that part, it appears not by any papers of his which have yet come to my hands.]

THE
EXCELLENCE AND NOBLENESSE
OF
TRUE RELIGION,

In its Rise and Original, in its Nature and Essence, in its Properties and Operations, in its Progress, in its Term and End.

GREG. NANZIENUS in Orat. 23.

Ἐγενεται δὲ λεγω, οὐχ ην οι πολλοι νομιζεσσιν. απαγε. αλλ' ην ευσεβεια
χαρακηριζει και τροπι, και η φρος το πρωτου αγαθου ανοδο.

HIERONIMUS ad CELANTIAM, Ep. 14.

Nescit religio nostra personas accipere, nec conditiones hominum sed
animos inspicit singulorum; servum et nobilem de moribus pro-
nunciat, sola apud Deum libertas est non servire peccatis: summa
apud Deum est nobilitas clarum esse virtutibus.

THE
EXCELLENCE AND NOBLENESSE
OF
TRUE RELIGION.

Prov. xv. 24.

The Way of Life is above to the Wise, that he may depart from Hell beneath.

THE INTRODUCTION.

IN this whole book of the Proverbs we find Solomon, one of the eldest sons of wisdom, always standing up and calling her blessed. His heart was both enlarged and filled with the pure influences of her beams, and therefore was perpetually adoring that sun which gave him light. “Wisdom is justified of all her children;” though the children of folly see no beauty nor comeliness in her, that they should desire her. That mind which is not touched with an inward sense of Divine wisdom, cannot estimate the true worth of it. But when wisdom once displays its excellencies in a purified soul, it is entertained there with the greatest love and delight, and receives its own image reflected back to itself in sweetest returns of love and praise. We have a clear manifestation of this sacred

sympathy in Solomon, an instrument which wisdom herself had tuned to play her Divine lessons upon: his words were every where full of Divine sweetness, matched with strength and beauty, as himself phraseth it, "like apples of gold in pictures of silver." The mind of a proverb is "to utter wisdom in a mystery," as the apostle sometimes speaks, and to wrap up Divine truth in a kind of enigmatical way, though in vulgar expressions. Which method of delivering Divine doctrine, (not to mention the writings of the ancient philosophers,) we find frequently pursued in the Holy Scripture, thereby both opening and hiding at once the truth which is offered to us. A proverb or parable being once unfolded, by reason of its affinity with the fancy, the more sweetly insinuates itself into that, and is from thence with the greater advantage transnitted to the understanding. In this state we are not able to behold truth in its own native beauty and lustre; but while we are veiled with mortality, truth must veil itself too, that it may the more freely converse with us. St. Austin hath well assigned the reason why we are so much delighted with metaphors and allegories, because they are so much proportioned to our senses, with which our reason hath contracted an intimacy. And therefore God, to accommodate his truth to our weak capacities, does, as it were, embody it in earthly expressions.

Thus much by way of preface to these words, being one of Solomon's excellent proverbs, viz. "The way of life is above to the wise." I shall from them take occasion to set forth the nobleness and generous spirit of true religion, which I suppose to be meant here by "the way of life." the word *לְמַלְאָכָה*, here rendered *above*, may signify that which is Divine and heavenly, high and excellent. And in this sense I shall consider it, my purpose being from hence to discourse of the excellent and noble spirit of true religion, (whether it be taken as it is in itself, or as it becomes an inward form and soul to the minds of good men;) and this in opposition to

that low and base-born spirit of irreligion, which is perpetually sinking from God, till it couches to the very centre of misery, the lowermost hell.

In discoursing upon this argument, I shall consider the excellency and nobleness of true religion : 1. In its rise and original. 2. In its nature and essence. 3. In its properties and operations. 4. In its progress. 5. In its term and end.

CHAP. I.

I. The Nobleness of Religion in Regard of its Original : it comes from Heaven, and moves towards Heaven again. God, the first Excellency and primitive Perfection. All Perfections are to be measured by their Approach to, and Participation of, the first Perfection. Religion, the greatest Participation of God. None capable of this Communication but the highest of created Beings. A two-fold Fountain in God, whence Religion flows, viz. 1. His Nature. 2. His Will.

WE begin with the first, viz. True religion is a noble thing in its rise and original. True religion derives its pedigree from heaven ; it comes from heaven, and constantly moves towards heaven again. It is a beam from God, as “every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Lights.” God is the first truth and primitive goodness. True religion is a vigorous efflux and emanation of both upon the spirits of men, and therefore is called a participation of the Divine nature. Indeed God hath copied out himself in all created being, having no other pattern to frame any thing by but his own essence ; so that all created being is *umbratilis similitudo entis increati*, a shadowy resemblance of God ; and is, by some stamp or other of God upon it, at least remotely allied to him. But true religion is such a communication of the Divinity, as none but the

highest of created beings are capable of. On the other side, sin and wickedness is of the basest and lowest original, as being nothing but a perfect degeneration from God, and those eternal rules of goodness which are derived from him. Religion is an heaven-born thing, the seed of God in the spirits of men, whereby they are formed to a likeness of himself. A true Christian is every way of a most noble extraction, of an heavenly and Divine pedigree, being born from above. The line of all earthly nobility, if it were followed to the beginning, would lead to Adam, where all the lines of descent meet in one; and the root of all extractions would be found planted in nothing else but *adamah*, red earth. But a Christian derives his line from Christ, who is the only-begotten Son of God, “the shining forth of his glory, and the character of his person.” We may truly say of Christ and Christians, as Zebah and Zalmunnah said of Gideon’s brethren, “As he is, so are they,” (according to their capacity,) “each one resembling the children of a king.” Titles of worldly honour in heaven’s heraldry are only nominal, but titles of Divine dignity signify some real thing, some real and Divine communications to the spirits of men. All perfections and excellencies, in any kind, are to be measured by their approach to that primitive perfection of all, God himself; and therefore the participation of the Divine nature cannot but entitle a Christian to the highest degree of dignity: “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God,” 1 John iii. 1.

Thus much for a more general discovery of the nobleness of religion as to its fountain and original: we may more particularly take notice of this in reference to that two-fold fountain in God, from whence all true religion flows, viz. 1. *His nature.* 2. *His will.*

1. *The immutable nature of God.* From thence arise all those *eternal rules of truth and goodness* which are the foundation of all religion, and which God at the first creation folded up in the soul of man. These we may

call the *truths of natural inscription*; understanding hereby either those fundamental principles of truth which reason, by a natural intuition, may behold in God, or those necessary corollaries and deductions that may be drawn from thence. I cannot think it so proper to say, that God ought infinitely to be loved because he commands it, as because he is infinite and unchangeable goodness. God hath stamped a copy of his own archetypal loveliness upon the soul, that man by reflecting into himself might behold there the glory of God, see within his soul all those ideas of truth which concern the nature and essence of God, by reason of its own resemblance of God; and so beget within himself the most free and generous motions of love to God. Reason in man being *lumen in lumine*, a light flowing from the Fountain and Father of Lights, and being, as Tully phraseth it, “*Participata similitudo rationis æternæ*,” (as the law of nature, the law written in man’s heart, is “*participatio legis æternæ in rationali creatura*,”) it was to enable man to work out of himself all those notions of God which are the true ground-work of love and obedience to God, and conformity to him. And in moulding the inward man into the greatest conformity to the nature of God was the perfection and efficacy of the religion of nature. But since man’s fall from God, the inward virtue and vigour of reason is much abated, the soul having suffered a *πλεοπόνησις*, as Plato speaks, a *defluvium pennarum, loss of its wings*. Those principles of Divine truth, which were first engraven upon man’s heart with the finger of God, are now, as the characters of some ancient monuments, less clear and legible. And therefore, besides the truths of natural inscription,—

2. God hath provided the truth of Divine revelation, which issues forth from his own free-will, and clearly discovers the way of our return to God, from whom we are fallen. And this truth, with the effects of it in the minds of men, the Scripture is wont to set forth under the

name of grace, as proceeding merely from the free bounty and overflowings of the Divine love. Of this revealed will is that of the apostle to be understood, “None hath known the things of God;” *εδεις, none*, neither angel nor man, could know the mind of God, could unlock the breast of God, or search out the counsels of his will. But God, out of the infinite riches of his compassions toward mankind, is pleased to unbosom his secrets, and most clearly to manifest “the way into the holiest of all, and “bring to light life and immortality;” and, in these last ages, to send his Son, who lay in his bosom from all eternity, to teach us his will, and declare his mind to us. When we “look unto the earth, behold darkness and dimness of anguish.” But when we look towards heaven, behold light breaking forth upon us, like the eyelids of the morning, and spreading its wings over the horizon of mankind, sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, “to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

But, besides this outward revelation of God’s will to men, there is also an inward impression of it on their minds, which is in a more especial manner attributed to God. We cannot see Divine things but in a Divine light. God only, who is the true light, and in whom there is no darkness at all, can so shine out of himself upon our glassy understandings, as to beget in them a picture of himself, his own will and pleasure, and turn the soul, (as the phrase is in Job xxxviii. 14,) like wax or clay, to the seal of his own light and love. He that made our souls in his own image and likeness, can easily find a way into them. The word that God speaks, having found a way into the soul, imprints itself there as with the point of a diamond. Men may teach grammar and rhetoric, but God teaches divinity. Thus it is God alone that acquaints the soul with the truths of revelation. And he also it is that does strengthen and raise the soul to better apprehensions even of natural truth: God being that in the intellectual world which the sun is in the sensible.

CHAP. II.

II. The Nobleness of Religion in respect of its Nature, briefly discovered in some Particulars. How a Man actuated by Religion, 1. Lives above the World : 2. Converses with himself, and knows how to love, value, and reverence himself in the best sense : 3. Lives above himself, not being content to enjoy himself, except he may enjoy God too, and himself in God. How he denies himself for God. The happy Privileges of a Soul united to God.

We have done with the first head, and come now to discourse with the like brevity on “the excellency and nobleness of religion in regard of its nature.”

1. “A good man, that is actuated by religion, lives above the world.” The soul is a more vigorous and puissant thing, when it is once restored to the possession of its own being, than to be bounded within the narrow sphere of mortality, or to be straitened within the narrow prison of sensual and corporeal delights ; but it will break forth with the greatest vehemency, and ascend upwards towards immortality. And when it converses more intimately with religion, it can scarce look back upon its own converses (though in a lawful way,) with earthly things, without being touched with an holy shamefacedness and a modest blushing ; it seems to be ashamed that it should be in the body. It is only true religion that teaches and enables men to die to this world and to all earthly things, and to rise above that vaporous sphere of sensual and earthly pleasures, which darken the mind and hinder it from enjoying the brightness of Divine light : the proper motion of religion is still upwards to its first Original. Whereas, on the contrary, the souls of wicked men are heavy, and sink down into earthly things, and couch as near as may be to the centre. Wicked men bury their souls in their bodies :

all their designs are bounded within the compass of this earth which they tread upon. The fleshly mind never minds any thing but flesh, and never rises above the outward matter, but always creeps up and down like shadows upon the surface of the earth. And if it begin at any time to make any faint assays upwards, it presently finds itself laden with a weight of sensuality which draws it down again. It was the opinion of the Academics, that the souls of wicked men, after their death, could not of a long season depart from the graves and sepulchres where their mates were buried; but there wandered up and down in a desolate manner, as not being able to leave those bodies which they were so much wedded to in this life.

2. A good man, one that is actuated by religion, lives in converse with his own reason; he lives at the height of his own being. He knows how to converse with himself, and truly to love and value himself. He measures not himself, like the epicure, by his inferior and earthly part, but by an immortal essence, and that of him which is from above; and so does climb up to the height of that immortal principle which is within him. A good man knows better how to reverence himself, without any self-flattery, than ever any stoic did. He principally looks upon himself as being what he is rather by his soul than by his body: he values himself by his soul, that being it which hath the greatest affinity with God; and so does not seek himself in the fading vanities of this life, nor in the poor and low delights of his senses: when the soul retires into itself, and views its own worth and excellency, it presently finds a chaste and virgin-love stirred up towards itself, and is from within the more excited and obliged to mind the preserving its own dignity and glory. To conclude this particular, a good man endeavours to walk by unchangeable reason; reason in a good man sits in the throne, and governs all the powers of his soul in a sweet harmony and agreement with itself: whereas wicked men live only a life of

opinion, being led up and down by the foolish fires of their own sensual apprehensions. In wicked men there is a democracy of wild lusts and passions, which violently hurry the soul up and down with restless motions. All wickedness is a sedition stirred up in the soul by the sensitive powers against reason. It was one of the great evils that Solomon saw under the sun, "Servants on horseback, and princes going as servants upon the ground." We may find the moral of it in every wicked man, whose souls are only as servants to wait upon their senses. In all such men the whole course of nature is turned upside down, and the cardinal points of motion in this little world are changed to contrary positions. But the motions of a good man are methodical, regular, and concentrical to reason. It is a fond imagination that religion should extinguish reason; whereas religion makes it more illustrious and vigorous; and they that live most in the exercise of religion, shall find their reason most enlarged. In Tully's account, capableness of religion seemed to be nothing different from rationality, and therefore he doubts not to give this for the most proper character of reason, that it is the tie between God and man.

3. A good man, one that is informed by true religion, lives above himself, and is raised to an intimate converse with the Divinity. He moves in a larger sphere than his own being, and cannot be content to enjoy himself, except he may enjoy God too, and himself in God. This we shall consider two ways.

1. In the self-denial of good men; they are ready to deny themselves for God. I mean not that they should deny their own reason, as some would have it; for that were to deny a beam of Divine light, and so to deny God, instead of denying ourselves for him. It is better resolved by some philosophers, that to follow reason is to follow God. But by self-denial I mean the soul's entire resignation of itself to him as to all points of service and duty. And thus the soul loves itself in God, and lives in

the possession not so much of its own being as of the Divinity; desiring only to be great in God, to glory in his light, and spread itself in his fulness ; to be filled always by him, and to empty itself again into him ; to receive all from him, and to expend all for him ; and so to live, not as its own, but as God's. The highest ambition of a good man is to serve the will of God. He takes no pleasure in himself, nor in any thing farther than he sees a stamp of God upon it. Whereas wicked men are imprisoned within the narrow circumference of their own beings, and perpetually frozen into a cold self-love which binds up all the vigour of their souls, that it cannot break forth or express itself in any noble way. The soul in which religion rules, says, as St. Paul did, “I live ; and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” On the contrary, a wicked man swells in his own thoughts, and pleaseth himself more or less with the imagination of a self-sufficiency. The Stoicks, seeing they could not raise themselves up to God, endeavoured to bring down God to their own model, imagining the Deity to be nothing else but some greater kind of animal, and a wise man to be almost one of his peers. And this is more or less the genius of wicked men ; they will be something in themselves, they wrap up themselves in their own being, move up and down in a sphere of self-love, live a professed independency upon God. It is the character only of a good man to be able to deny himself, and to make a full surrender of himself to God ; forgetting himself, and minding nothing but the will of his Creator ; triumphing in nothing more than in his own nothingness, and in the allness of the Divinity. But indeed this his being nothing is the only way to be all things ; this his having nothing the truest way of possessing all things.

2. As a good man lives above himself in a way of self-denial, so he lives also above himself as he lives in the enjoyment of God. And this is the very soul and essence of true religion, to unite the soul in the nearest intimacy with God. Then indeed the soul lives most nobly, when

it feels itself to live, and move, and have its being in God; which though the law of nature makes the common condition of all created being, yet it is only true religion that can give us a feeling and comfortable sense of it. God is not present to wicked men, when his almighty essence supports them and maintains them in being; but he is present to him that can touch him, that hath an inward feeling knowledge of God, and is intimately united to him.

Religion is life and spirit, which flowing out from God who hath life in himself, returns to him again as into its own original, carrying the souls of good men up with it. The spirit of religion is always ascending upwards, and spreading itself through the whole essence of the soul, loosens it from a self-confinement and narrowness, and so renders it more capacious of Divine enjoyment. God envies not his people any good; but, being infinitely bountiful, is pleased to impart himself to them in this life, so far as they are capable of his communications: they stay not for all their happiness till they come to heaven. Religion always carries its reward along with it, and when it acts most vigorously upon the mind and spirit of man, it then most of all fills it with an inward sense of Divine sweetness. To conclude, to walk with God is in Scripture made the character of a good man, and it is the highest perfection and privilege of created nature to converse with the Divinity. Whereas, on the contrary, wicked men converse with nothing but their lusts and the vanities of this fading life, which flatter them for awhile with unhallowed delights and a mere shadow of contentment; and when these are gone, they find both substance and shadow to be lost eternally. But true goodness brings in a constant revenue of solid and substantial satisfaction to the spirit of a good man, delighting always to sit by those eternal springs that feed and maintain it: the spirit of a good man is always drinking in fountain-goodness, and fills itself more and more, till it be filled with all the fulness of God.

CHAP. III.

III. The Nobleness of Religion in regard of its Properties, of which this is one. 1. Religion enlarges all the Faculties of the Soul, and begets a true Ingenuity, Liberty, and Amplitude, the most free and generous Spirit in the Minds of good Men. How formal Christians make an Art of Religion, set it such Bounds as may not exceed the scant Measure of their Principles. A good Man finds not his Religion without him, but as a living Principle within him.

HAVING discoursed on the nobleness of religion in its original and nature, we come now to consider the excellency of religion in its properties.

The first property and effect of true religion, whereby it expresseth its own nobleness, is this, “That it widens and enlarges all the faculties of the soul, and begets a true ingenuity, liberty, and amplitude, the most free and generous spirit, in the minds of good men.” The Jews have a good maxim to this purpose, “None truly noble, but he that applies himself to religion.” There is a living soul of religion in good men, which, spreading itself through all their faculties, spirits all the wheels of motion, and enables them to dilate and extend themselves more fully upon God and all Divine things, without being pinched or straitened within themselves. Whereas wicked men are of most narrow and confined spirits, they are so contracted by earthly and created things, so imprisoned in a dark dungeon of sensuality and selfishness, so straitened through their carnal designs and ends, that they cannot stretch themselves nor look beyond the horizon of time and sense.

The nearer any being comes to God, who is that infinite fulness that fills all in all, the more vast, and large, and unbounded it is; as the further it slides from him, the more it is straitened and confined. Plato long since

concluded concerning the condition of sensual men, that they live like a shell-fish, and can never move up and down but in their own prison, which they ever carry about with them. Were I to define sin, I would call it "the sinking of a man's soul from God into a sensual selfishness." All the freedom that wicked men have, is but (like that of banished men,) to wander up and down in the wilderness of this world from one den and cave to another.

The more high and noble any being is, so much the deeper root have all its innate virtues and properties within it, and are by so much the more universal in their issues and actings upon other things: and such an inward living principle of virtue and activity further heightened, united, and informed with light and truth, we may call liberty. Of this truly noble and Divine liberty religion is the mother and nurse, leading the soul to God, and so impregnating that inward vital principle of activity and vigour that is embosomed in it, that it is able without any inward disturbance from controlling lusts to exercise itself, and act with the greatest complacency in the most full and ample manner upon that first, universal, and unbounded essence. The most generous freedom can never be taken in its full and just dimensions and proportion, but when all the powers of the soul exercise and spend themselves in the most ample manner upon the infinite and essential goodness. If we should ask a good man, when he finds himself best at ease, when he finds himself most free; his answer would be, when he is under the most powerful constraints of Divine love. There is a sort of mechanical Christians in the world, that, not finding religion acting like a living form within them, satisfy themselves only to make an art of it, and rather inform and actuate it, than are informed by it; and setting it such bounds and limits as may not exceed the short and scanty measures of their home-born principles, they endeavour to fit the notions of their own

minds as so many examples to it: and it being a circle of their own making, they can either ampliate or contract it accordingly as they can force their own minds and dispositions to suit with it. But true religion is no art, but an inward nature that contains all the laws and measures of its motion within itself. A good man finds not his religion without him, but as a living principle within him; and all his faculties are still endeavouring to unite themselves more and more to the nearest intimacy with it as with their proper perfection. There is that amiableness in religion, that strong sympathy between the soul and it, that it needs carry no testimonials along with it. If it could be supposed that God should plant a religion in the soul that had no affinity or alliance with it, it would grow there but as a strange slip. But God, when he gives his laws to men, does not by virtue of his absolute dominion, dictate any thing at random, as some imagine; but he measures all by his own eternal goodness. Had God himself been any thing else than the first and greatest good of man, then to have loved him with the full strength of all our faculties, should not have been the first and greatest commandment, as our Saviour tells us it is. Some are apt to look upon God as some peevish and self-willed thing, because themselves are such. And seeing their own absolute and naked wills are for the most part the rules of all their actions, and the impositions which they lay upon others; they think that heaven's monarchy is such an arbitrary thing too, as is governed by nothing else but by an almighty absolute will. But the soul that is acquainted most intimately with the Divine will, would more certainly resolve us, that God's unchangeable goodness, (which makes the Divinity an uniform thing, and to settle together upon its own centre, as I may speak with reverence,) is also the unchangeable rule of his will; neither can he any more swerve from it than he can swerve from himself. Nor does he charge any duty upon man without consulting first with his goodness. Which

being the original and adequate object of a good man's will and affections, it must needs be that all the issues and effluxes of it be entertained with an answerable complacency and cheerfulness. This is the hinge upon which all true religion turns, the proper centre about which it moves; which, taking a fast and sure hold on a correspondent principle in the soul of man, raiseth it above the confines of mortality, and, in the day of its mighty power, makes it become a free-will offering unto God.

CHAP IV.

The Second Property discovering the Nobleness of Religion, viz. That it restores Man to a just Dominion over himself, enables him to overcome his Self-will and Passions. Of Self-will, and the many Evils that flow from it. Of Self-denial, and the having Power over our Wills; the Happiness and the Privileges of such a State.

THE second property or effect of religion, whereby it discovers its own nobleness (and it is somewhat a-kin to the former particular,) is this, "That it restores a good man to a just power and dominion over himself and his own will, enables him to overcome himself, his self-will and passions, and to command himself and all his powers for God." It is only religion that enthrones man's deposed reason, and establisheth within him a just empire over all those blind powers and passions which so impetuously rend a man from the possession and enjoyment of himself. Those turbulent and unruly, uncertain and unconstant motions of passion and self-will that dwell in degenerate minds, divide them perpetually from themselves, and are always moulding several factions and tumultuous combinations within them against the dominion of reason. And the only way to unite man firmly to himself, is by uniting him to God, and establishing in him a firm agreement with the first and primitive being.

There is nothing in the world so boisterous as self-will, which is never guided by any fixed or steady rules, but is perpetually hurried to and fro by blind and furious pride and passions. This is the true source of all that envy, malice, bitterness of spirit, and impatience, of all those black and dark passions, those inordinate desires and lusts, that reign in the hearts and lives of wicked men. A man's self-will throws him out of all true enjoyment of his own being. Therefore it was our Saviour's counsel to his disciples, "In patience possess your souls." We may say of that self-will which is lodged in the heart of a wicked man, it is the filthiness and poison of the serpent. This is the seed of the evil spirit which is perpetually at enmity with the seed of God and the heaven-born nature. Its design is, with a giant-like pride, to climb up into the throne of the Almighty, and to establish an unbounded tyranny in contradiction to the will of God, which is nothing else but the issue and efflux of his eternal and unbounded goodness. This is the very heart of the old Adam that is within men. This is the hellish spirit of self-will. It would solely prescribe laws to all things ; it would fain be the fountain of all affairs ; it would judge all things at its own tribunal. They, in whose spirits this principle rules, would have their own fancies and opinions to be the measure of all good and evil ; these are the plumb-lines they apply to all things to find out their rectitude or obliquity. He that will not submit himself to the eternal and uncreated will, but, instead of it, endeavours to set up his own will, makes himself the most real idol in the world, and exalts himself against all that is called God and ought to be worshipped. To worship a graven image, or to make cakes and burn incense to the queen of heaven, is not a worse idolatry than it is for a man to set up self-will, to devote himself to the serving it, and to give up himself to a compliance with his own will. When God made the world, he did not make it merely for the exercise of his almighty power, and then throw it out of his hands, and leave it

to subsist by itself as a thing that had no further relation to him. But he derived himself through the whole creation, so gathering and knitting up all the several pieces of it again, that as the first production and continued subsistence of all things is from himself, so the ultimate tendency of all things might be to him. Now that which first endeavoured a divorce between God and his creation, and to make a conquest of it, was that diabolical arrogance and self-will that crept up and wound itself, serpent-like, into apostate minds and spirits. This is the true strain of that hellish nature, to live independently of God, and to derive the principles from another beginning, and carry on the line of all motions and operations to another end, than God himself, by whom, and to whom, and for whom all things subsist.

From what hath been said concerning this powerful and dangerous enemy that wars against our souls, and against the Divine will, may the excellency and noble spirit of true religion appear, in that it tames the impetuousness and turbulency of self-will. Then indeed does religion perform the highest conquests, then does it display the greatness of its strength and the excellency of its power, when it overcomes this great Arimanus, that hath so firmly seated himself in the very centre of the soul. "Who is the man of courage and valour? He that subdues his concupiscence, his own will;" is a Jewish maxim attributed to Ben Zoma, and a most undoubted truth. This was the grand lesson that our great Master came to teach us, viz. to deny our own wills; neither was there any thing that he endeavoured more to promote by his own example, as he tells us of himself, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me;" and again, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God, yea, thy law is within my heart;" and, in his greatest agonies, with a clear and cheerful submission to the Divine will, he often repeats it, "Not my will, but thy will be done;" and so he hath taught us to

pray and so to live. This indeed is the true life and spirit of religion, this is religion in its meridian altitude, its just dimensions. A true Christian that hath power over his own will, may live nobly and happily, and enjoy a perpetually-clear heaven within the serenity of his own mind. When the sea of this world is most rough and tempestuous about him, then can he ride safely at anchor within the haven, by a sweet compliance of his will with God's will. He can look about him, and with an even and indifferent mind behold the world either smile or frown upon him; neither will he abate of the least of his contentment for all the unkind usage he meets with in this life. He that hath got the mastery over his own will, feels no violence from without, finds no contests within; and like a strong man, keeping his house, he preserves all his goods in safety. And when God calls for him out of this state of mortality, he finds in himself a power to lay down his life; neither is it so much taken from him, as freely surrendered up by him. This is the highest piece of prowess, the noblest achievement, by which a man becomes lord over himself, and the master of his own thoughts, motions, and purposes. This is the royal prerogative, the high dignity conferred upon good men by our Lord and Saviour, whereby, overcoming this, both his and their enemy, their self-will and passions, they are enabled to sit down with him in his throne, as he, overcoming in another way, is set down with his Father in his throne.

Religion begets the most heroic, free, and generous motions in the minds of good men. There is no where so much of a truly magnanimous spirit as in those who are best acquainted with the power of religion. Other men are slaves and captives to one vanity or other; but the truly religious is above them all, and able to command himself and all his powers for God. That bravery and gallantries which seem to be in the great Nimrods of this world is nothing else but the swelling of their own unbounded pride and vain-glory. It hath been observed of

the greatest monarchs of the world, that in the midst of their triumphs they themselves have been led captives to vice. All the gallantry and puissance which the bravest spirits of the world boast of, is but a poor confined thing, and extends itself only to some particular cases and circumstances: but the valour and puissance of a soul impregnated by religion hath, in a sort, an universal extent; as St. Paul speaks of himself, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;" it is not determined to this or that particular object, or time, or place, but all things, whatsoever belong to a creature, fall under the level thercof. Religion is by St. Paul described to be "the spirit of power," in opposition to "the spirit of fear," 2 Tim. i. as all sin is by Simplicius well described to be impotency and weakness. Sin, by its deadly infusions into the soul, wastes and eats out the innate vigour of it, and casts it into such a deep lethargy, that it is not able to recover itself. But religion, being once conveyed into the soul, awakens and enlivens it, and makes it renew its strength like an eagle, and mount strongly upwards towards heaven; and so uniting the soul to God, the centre of life and strength, renders it undaunted and invincible. Who can tell the inward life and vigour that the soul may be filled with, when once it is in conjunction with an almighty essence? There is a hidden virtue in the soul of man which then begins to discover itself when the Divine Spirit spreads forth its influences upon it. Every thing, the more spiritual it is, the more active and vigorous it is; as the more any thing sinks into matter, the more dull and sluggish and unwieldy. Now nothing doth more purify, more exalt the soul, than religion, when the soul suffers God to sit within it "as a refiner and purifier of silver," and when it "abides the day of his coming; for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap." Thus the soul, being purified and spiritualized, and changed more and more into the glorious image of God, is "able to do all things;" "out of weakness is made strong," gives proof of its Divine vigour

and activity, and shews itself to be a noble and puissant spirit, such as God did at first create it.

CHAP. V.

The third Property or Effect discovering the Nobleness of Religion, viz. That it enables a Man to propound to himself the best End, viz. The Glory of God, and his own becoming like God. Low and particular Ends debase and straiten a Man's Spirit: the universal, highest, and last End both ennobles and enlarges it. Men are prone to flatter themselves with a pretended aiming at the Glory of God. A more full Explication of what is meant by a Man's directing all his Actions to the Glory of God. That we are not nicely to distinguish between the Glory of God and our own Salvation. That Salvation is nothing else but a true Participation of the Divine Nature.

THE third property or effect whereby religion discovers its own excellency, is this, “ That it directs and enables a man to propound to himself the best end of life, viz. The glory of God, the highest Being, and his own assimilation or becoming like unto God.”

That Christian in whom religion rules powerfully, is not so low in his ambition as to pursue any of the things of this world as his ultimate end. His soul is too big for earthly designs; but understanding himself to come from God, he is continually returning to him. It is not worth the while for the mind to pursue any perfection lower than its own, or to aim at any end more ignoble than itself. There is nothing that more straitens and confines the free-born soul than the particularity, indigency, and penury of that end which it pursues. When it complies most of all with this lower world, the true nobleness and freedom of it is then most disputable. It never more degenerates from itself, than when it becomes enthralled

to some particular interest. As, on the other side, it never acts more freely or fully, than when it extends itself upon the most universal end. As low ends debase a man's spirit, supplant and rob it of its birth-right; so the highest and last end raises and ennobles it, and enlarges it into a more universal and comprehensive capacity of enjoying that one unbounded goodness. It makes it spread and dilate itself in the infinite sphere of the Divine Being and blessedness; it makes it live in the fulness of him that fills all in all.

Every thing is most properly such as the end is which is aimed at. The mind of man is always shaping itself into a conformity to that which is his end; and the nearer it draws to it, the greater likeness it bears to it. There is a secret energy issuing from that which the mind propounds to itself as its end, to mould and fashion it according to its own model. The soul is always stamped with the same characters that are engraven upon the end it aims at; and while it converses with it, and sets itself before it, it is turned as wax to the seal. Man's soul conceives all its thoughts and imaginations before his end, as Laban's ewes did their young before the rods in the watering-troughs. He that pursues any worldly interest or earthly thing as his end, becomes himself also earthly. And the more the soul directs itself to God, the more it becomes God-like, deriving a print of that glory and beauty upon itself which it converseth with, as it is excellently set forth by the apostle, "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." That spirit of ambition and popularity that so violently transports the minds of men into a pursuit of vain-glory, makes them as vain as that popular air they live upon. The spirit of this world that draws forth a man's designs after worldly interests, makes him as unstable, inconstant, tumultuous, and perplexed a thing as the world is. Or the contrary, the spirit of true religion steering and directing the mind and life to God, makes it an uniform

stable, and quiet thing, as God himself is. It is only true goodness in the soul of man guiding it steadily and uniformly towards God, directing it and all its actions to the one last end, that can give it a true consistency and composedness within itself.

All self-seeking and self-love do but imprison the soul, and confine it to its own home. The mind of a good man is too noble, too big for such a particular life; he hath learned to despise his own being, in comparison of that uncreated beauty and goodness which is so infinitely transcendent to himself or any created thing; he reckons his choice and best affections and designs as too choice and precious a treasure to be spent upon such a poor sorry thing as himself, or upon any thing else but God.

This was the life of Christ, and is in some degree the life of every one that partakes of the Spirit of Christ. Such Christians seek not their own glory, but the glory of him that sent them into this world. They know they were brought forth into this world not to set up or drive a trade for themselves, but to serve the will and pleasure of him that made them, and to finish that work he hath appointed them. It were not worth the while to have been born or to live, had it been only for such a penurious end as ourselves are. It is most God-like, and best suits with the spirit of religion, for a Christian to live wholly to God, to live the life of God, having his own life hid with Christ in God; and thus in a sober sense he becomes deified. This indeed is such a deification as is not transacted merely upon the stage of fancy by arrogance and presumption, but in the highest powers of the soul by a living and quickening spirit of true religion there uniting God and the soul together in the unity of affections, will, and end.

I should now pass from this to another particular; but because many are apt to misapprehend the notion of God's glory, and flatter themselves with their imaginary aiming at the glory of God, I think it may be of use a little more distinctly to unfold the design that a religious

mind drives on in directing itself and all its actions to God. We are therefore to consider, that this doth not consist in some transient thoughts of God and his glory as the end we propound to ourselves in any undertakings. A man does not direct all his actions to the glory of God by forming a conception in his mind, or stirring up a strong imagination upon any action, that it must be for the glory of God. It is not the thinking of God's glory that is glorifying of him. As all other parts of religion may be apishly acted over by imagination, so also may the internal part of religion many times be acted over with much seeming grace by our own fancy and passions ; these often love to be drawing the pictures of religion, and use their best arts to render them beautiful and pleasing. But though true practical religion derives its force and beauty through all the lower powers of a man's soul, yet it hath not its rise nor throne there. As religion consists not in a form of words which signify nothing, so neither doth it consist in a set of fancies. Our Saviour hath best taught what it is to live to God's glory, or to glorify God, viz. to be fruitful in all holiness, and to live so that our lives may shine with his grace spreading itself through our whole man.

We rather glorify God by receiving the impressions of his glory upon us, than by communicating any kind of glory to him. Then does a good man become the tabernacle of God wherein the Divine Shechinah does rest, and which the Divine glory fills, when the frame of his mind and life is wholly according to that idea and pattern which he receives from the mount. We best glorify him when we grow most like him. And we then act most for his glory, when a true spirit of sanctity, justice, and meekness, runs through all our actions ; when we so live in the world as becomes those that converse with the great mind and wisdom of the whole world, with that Almighty Spirit that made, supports, and governs all things, with that Being from whence all good flows, and in which there is no spot, stain, or shadow of evil : and so being cap-

tivated and overcome by the sense of the Divine loveliness and goodness, endeavour to be like him, and conform ourselves to him.

When God seeks his own glory, he does not so much endeavour any thing without himself. He did not bring this stately fabric of the universe into being, that he might for such a monument of his mighty power and beneficence gain some panegyrics or applause from a little of that fading breath which he had made. Neither was that gracious contrivance of restoring lapsed men to himself, a plot to get himself some eternal hallelujahs, as if he had so ardently thirsted after the lays of glorified spirits, or desired a choir of souls to sing forth his praises. Neither was it to let the world see how magnificent he was. No, it is his own internal glory that he most loves, and the communication thereof which he seeks: as Plato sometimes speaks of the Divine love, it arises not out of indigency, as created love does, but out of fulness and redundancy; it is an overflowing fountain; and that love which descends upon created being is a free efflux from the Almighty source of love. And it is well pleasing to him that those creatures which he hath made should partake of it. Though God cannot seek his own glory so as if he might acquire any addition to himself; yet he may seek it so as to communicate it out of himself. "God giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." And by that glory of his which he loves to impart to his creatures, I understand those impressions of wisdom, justice, patience, mercy, love, peace, joy, and other Divine gifts which he bestows freely upon the minds of men. And thus God triumphs in his own glory, and takes pleasure in the communication of it.

As God's seeking his own glory in respect of us, is most properly the flowing forth of his goodness upon us: so our seeking the glory of God is most properly our endeavouring a participation of his goodness, and an earnest, incessant pursuing after Divine perfection. When God becomes so great in our eyes, and all created things

so little, that we reckon nothing worthy our aim or ambition, but a serious participation of the Divine nature, and the exercise of Divine virtues, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness. When the soul, beholding the infinite beauty and loveliness of the Divinity, and then looking down and beholding all created perfection mantled over with darkness, is ravished into love and admiration of that never-setting brightness, and endeavours after the greatest resemblance of God in justice, love, and goodness ; when conversing with him by a secret feeling of the virtue, sweetness, and power of his goodness, we endeavour to assimilate ourselves to him : then we may be said to glorify him indeed. God seeks no glory but his own ; and we have none of our own to give him. God in all things seeks himself and his own glory, as finding nothing better than himself ; and when we love him above all things, and endeavour to be most like him, we declare plainly that we count nothing better than he is.

I doubt we are too nice logicians sometimes in distinguishing between the glory of God and our own salvation. We cannot, in a true sense, seek our own salvation more than the glory of God, which triumphs most and discovers itself most effectually in the salvation of souls ; for indeed this salvation is nothing else but a true participation of the Divine nature. Heaven is not a thing without us, nor is happiness any thing distinct from a true conjunction of the mind with God in a secret feeling of his goodness and reciprocation of affection to him, wherein the Divine glory most unfolds itself. And there is nothing that a soul, touched with any serious sense of God, can more earnestly thirst after or seek with more strength of affection than this. Then shall we be happy, when God comes to be all in all in us. To love God above ourselves is not indeed so properly to love him above the salvation of our souls, as if these were distinct things ; but it is to love him above all our own sinful affections, and above our particular beings, and to conform ourselves to him. And as that which is good relatively and in order to us,

is so much the better, by how much the more it is conformed to us: so, on the other side, that which is good absolutely and essentially, requires that our minds and affections should, as far as may be, be commensurate and conformed to it: and herein is God most glorified, and we made happy. As we cannot truly love the first and highest good while we subordinate it to ourselves: so neither is our own salvation consistent with any such sordid, pinching and particular love. We cannot be completely blessed, till God exercise its sovereignty over all the facultiess of our souls, rendering them as like to itself as may consist with their proper capacity.

CHAP. VI.

The fourth Property or Effect discovering the Excellency of Religion, viz. That it begets the greatest Serenity and Composedness of Mind, and brings the truest Contentment, the purest and most satisfying Pleasure to every holy Soul.

THE fourth property and effect of true religion, wherein it expresseth its own nobleness, is this, “That it begets the greatest serenity, constancy, and composedness of mind, and brings the truest contentment, the most satisfying joy and pleasure, the purest and most Divine sweetnesse to the spirits of good men.” Every good man, in whom religion rules, is at peace and unity with himself, is as a city compacted together. Grace doth more and more reduce all the faculties of the soul into a perfect subjection and subordination to itself. The union and conjunction of the soul with God, that primitive Unity, is that which is the alone original and fountain of all peace, and the centre of rest: as the further any being slides from God, the more it breaks into discords within itself, as not having any centre within itself which might collect and unite all the faculties hereof, and so knit

them together in a sweet confederacy amongst themselves. God only is such an almighty goodness as can attract all the powers in man's soul to itself, as being an object adequate to the largest capacities of any created being, and so unite man perfectly to himself in the true enjoyment of one uniform and simple good.

It must be one supreme good that can fix man's mind, which otherwise will be tossed up and down in perpetual uncertainties, and become as many several things as those poor particularities are which it meets with. A wicked man's life is so distracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects, that it never is nor can be consistent to itself, nor continue in any composed, settled frame. It is the most intricate, irregular, and confused thing in the world, no one part of it agreeing with another, because the whole is not firmly knit together by the power of some one last end running through all. Whereas the life of a good man is under the sweet command of one supreme goodness and last end. This alone is that living form and soul, which, running through all the powers of the mind and actions of the life, collects all together into one fair and beautiful system, making all that variety conspire into perfect unity; whereas else all would fall asunder like the members of a dead body when once the soul is gone, every little particle flitting each from other. A divided mind, and a multiform life, speaks the greatest disparagement that may be. It is only one last end that can reconcile a man perfectly to himself and his own happiness. This is the best temper and composedness of the soul, when by a conjunction with one chief good and last end it is drawn up into an unity and consent with itself; when all the faculties of the soul, with their several motions, though never so many in themselves, like so many lines meet together in one and the same centre. It is not one and the same goodness that always acts the faculties of a wicked man; but as many several images and pictures of goodness as a quick and working fancy can represent to him; which so divide his affections, that he is no one

thing within himself, but tossed hither and thither by the most independent principles and imaginations that may be. But a good man hath singled out the supreme goodness, which by an omnipotent sweetness draws all his affections after it, and so makes them all with the greatest complacency conspire together in the pursuit and embraces of it. Were there not some infinite and self-sufficient goodness, and that perfectly one, man would be a most miserably distracted creature. As the restless appetite within man after some infinite and sovereign good, (without the enjoyment of which it could never be satisfied) does commend unto us the notion of a Deity: so the perpetual distractions and divisions that would arise in the soul upon a plurality of deities, may seem no less to evince the unity of that Deity. Were not this chief good perfectly one, were there any other equal to it; man's soul would hang *in æquilibrio*, equally poised, equally desiring the enjoyment of both, but moving to neither; like a piece of iron between two loadstones of equal virtue. But when religion enters into the soul, it charms all its restless rage and violent appetite, by discovering to it the universal fountain-fulness of one supreme Almighty Goodness; and leading it out of itself into a conjunction therewith, it lulls it into the most undisturbed rest and quietness in the lap of Divine enjoyment; where it meets with full contentment, and rests adequately satisfied in the fruition of the infinite, uniform, and essential goodness and loveliness.

The peace which a religious soul is possessed of is such a peace as passeth all understanding. The joy that it meets with in the ways of holiness is "unspeakable and full of glory." The delights and sweetesses that accompany a religious life are of a purer and more excellent nature than the pleasures of worldly men. The spirit of a good man is a more pure and refined thing than to delight itself in the thick mire of earthly and sensual pleasures, which carnal men roll and tumble themselves in with so much greediness. It speaks the degeneration of any

soul, that it should desire to incorporate itself with any of the gross, dreggy delights here below. But a soul purified by religion from all earthly dregs, delights to mingle itself only with things Divine and spiritual. There is nothing that can beget any pleasure but in some faculty which hath some kindred and acquaintance with it. As it is in the senses, so in every other faculty, there is a natural kind of science whereby it can single out its proper object from every thing else, and is better able to define it to himself than the exactest artist in the world can ; and when once it hath found it out, it presently feels itself so fitted by it, that it dissolves into secret joy in the entertainment of it. True delight and joy is begotten by the conjunction of some discerning faculty with its proper object. The proper objects for a mind and spirit are Divine and immaterial things, with which it hath the greatest affinity, and therefore triumphs most in its converse with them ; when it converseth most with these noble objects, it behaves itself most gracefully ; and it lives also most deliciously, nor can it any where else be better provided for, or indeed fare so well. A good man despairs to be beholden to the wit, or art, or industry of any creature to find him out and bring him in a constant revenue and maintenance for his joy and pleasure. The language of his heart is that of the Psalmist, “ Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.” Religion always carries a sufficient provision of joy and sweetness along with it to maintain itself with : “ The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” Religion is no sullen stoicism or oppressing melancholy, it is no entralling tyranny exercised over those noble affections of love and delight, as those men that were never acquainted with the life of it may imagine ; but it is full of a vigorous and masculine delight, and such as advanceth and ennobles the soul, and does not weaken or dispirit it, as sensual and earthly joys do, when the soul, unacquainted with religion, is enforced to give entertainment to these gross and earthly things,

for want of some better good. The truly-religious soul affects nothing primarily but God himself; his contentment, even in the midst of his worldly employments, is in the sun of the Divine favour that shines upon him. This is as the manna that lies upon the top of all outward blessings which his spirit gathers up and feeds upon with delight. Religion consists not in a toilsome drudgery about some external performances; nor is it only the spending of ourselves in such attendances upon God and services to him as are accommodated to this life, (though every employment for God is both amiable and honourable.) But there is something of our religion which leads us into the porch of heaven, and to the confines of eternity. It sometimes carries up the soul into a mount of transfiguration, or to the top of Pisgah, where it may take a prospect of the promised land; and gives it a map of its future inheritance. It gives it some anticipations of blessedness, some foretastes of those joys, those rivers of pleasure which run at God's right hand for evermore.

I might add the tranquillity and composedness of a good man's spirit in reference to all external molestations. Religion having made a thorough pacification of the soul within itself, renders it impregnable to all outward assaults. So that it is a rest, and lives securely in the midst of all those boisterous storms and tempests that make such violent impressions upon the spirits of wicked men. The more the soul is restored to itself, and lives at the height of its own being, the more easily may it despise any design or combination against it by the most blustering giants in the world. A Christian that enjoys himself in God, will not be beholden to the world's fair and gentle usage for the composedness of his mind; no, he enjoys that peace and tranquillity within himself which no creature can bestow upon him, or take from him.

It is the union of the soul with God, that uniform, simple, and unbounded good, which is the sole original of all true inward peace. It were not an happiness worth the having, for a mind, like an hermit sequestered from

all things else, by a recession into itself to spend an eternity in self-converse and the enjoyment of such a diminutive superficial nothing as itself is. It is peculiar to God to be happy in himself alone ; and God, who has been more liberal in his provisions for man, hath created in man such a spring of restless motion, that with the greatest impatience forceth him out of himself, and violently tosseth him to and fro, till he come to fix himself upon some solid and self-subsistent goodness. Could a man find himself withdrawn from all material things, and perfectly retired into himself ; were the whole world so quiet and calm about him as not to make the least attempt upon the composedness of his mind ; might he be so well entertained at his own home as to find no frowns from his own conscience ; might he have that security from heaven, that God would not disquiet his fancied tranquillity by embittering his thoughts with any dreadful apprehensions ; yet he should find something within him that would not let him be at rest, but would rend him from himself, and toss him from his own foundation. There is an insatiable appetite in the soul of man, like a greedy lion hunting after his prey, that would render him impatient of his own penury, and could never satisfy itself with such a thin and spare diet as he finds at home. There are two principal faculties in the soul, which, like the two daughters of the horse-leach, are always crying, "Give, give." These are those hungry vultures, which, if they cannot find their prey abroad, return and gnaw the soul itself. Where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. By this we may see how unavailable to the attaining of true rest that conceit of the Stoicks was, who supposed the only way hereto was this, to confine the soul to its own home. We read in the gospel of such a question of our Saviour's, "What went you out into the wilderness to see?" We may invert it, What do you return within to see? A soul confined within the narrow cell of its own particular being? Such a soul deprives itself of all that almighty

glory and goodness which shines round about it, which spreads itself through the whole universe ; I say, it deprives itself of all this for the enjoying of such a poor, petty, and diminutive thing as itself is, which yet it can never enjoy truly in such a retiredness.

We have seen the peaceful and happy state of the truly religious ; but it is otherwise with irreligious men. “There is no peace to the wicked ; but they are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” The mind of a wicked man is like the sea when it roars and rages through the striving of contrary winds upon it. Furious lusts and wild passions within, as they war against heaven and the soul, so they war amongst themselves, maintaining perpetual contests, and contending which shall be the greatest. The minds of wicked men are like those disconsolate and desolate spirits which our Saviour speaks of, who being cast out of their habitation, wander up and down through dry and desert places, seeking rest but finding none. The soul that finds not some solid and self-sufficient good to centre itself upon, is a boisterous and restless thing. And being without God, it wanders up and down the world, destitute, afflicted, tormented with vehement hunger and thirst after some satisfying good. And as any one shall bring it tidings, Lo here, or lo there is good ! it presently goes out towards it, and with a swift and speedy flight hastens after it. The sense of an inward indigency doth stimulate and enforce it to seek its contentment without itself, and so it wanders up and down from one creature to another ; and thus becomes distracted by a multiplicity of objects. And while it cannot find some one object upon which, as being perfectly adequate to its capacities, it may wholly bestow itself ; while it is tossed with restless and vehement motions of desire and love through a world of painted beauties ; it is far from true rest and satisfaction, from a fixt, composed temper of spirit ; but being distracted by a multiplicity of objects and ends, there can never be any firm and stable peace at

home. Nor can there be a firm amity and friendship abroad betwixt wicked men themselves, as Aristotle in his Ethics does conclude, because all vice is so multiform and inconsistent a thing, and so there can be no true concatenation of affections and ends between them. Whereas in all good men, virtue and goodness is one form and soul to them all, that unites them together; and there is the one simple and uniform good, that guides and governs them all. They are not as a ship tossed in the tumultuous ocean of this world, without any compass to steer by; but they direct their course by the certain guidance of the one last end, as the true pole-star of all their motion.

By what hath been said may appear the vast difference between the ways of sin and holiness. Inward distractions and disturbances, "tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil; but to every man that worketh good, glory, honour, and peace," inward composedness and tranquillity of spirit; pure and divine joys, far excelling all sensual pleasures: in a word, true contentment of spirit, and full satisfaction in God, whom the pious soul loves above all things, and longs still after a nearer enjoyment of him. I shall conclude this particular with what Plotinus concludes his book, That the life of holy and divine men is a life not touched with these vanishing delights of time, but a flight of the soul alone to God alone.

CHAP. VII.

The fifth Property or Effect discovering the Excellency of Religion, viz. That it advanceth the Soul to an holy Boldness and humble Familiarity with God, and to a comfortable Confidence concerning the Love of God toward it, and its own Salvation. The Vanity and Absurdity of that Opinion, That in a perfect Resignation of our Wills to God's Will, a Man should be content with his own Damnation.

THE fifth property or effect whereby true religion discovers its own nobleness and excellency, is this, "That it advanceth the soul to an holy boldness and humble familiarity with God, as also to a well-grounded hope and comfortable confidence concerning the love of God toward it, and its own salvation." The truly religious soul maintains an humble and sweet familiarity with God; and with great alacrity of spirit, without any consternation, is enabled to look upon the glory and majesty of the most High; but sin and wickedness is pregnant with fearfulness and horror. While men "walk in darkness," and "are of the night," (as the apostle speaks,) then it is only that they are vexed with those ugly and ghastly spectres that terrify and torment them. But when once the day breaks, and true religion opens herself upon the soul, like the eyelids of the morning, all those frightful apparitions flee away. As all light, and love, and joy descend from above from the Father of lights; so all darkness, and fearfulness, and despair are from below; they arise from corrupt and earthly minds, and are like those gross vapours arising from this earthly globe, and not being able to get up towards heaven, spread themselves about the circumference of that body where they were first begotten, infesting it with darkness, and generating into thunder and lightning, clouds and tempests. But the higher a Christian ascends above this dark dungeon of the body; the more religion prevails within him, the more shall he find himself, as it were, in a clear heaven, in a region that is calm and serene; and the more will those black and dark affections of fear and despair vanish away, and those clear and bright affections of love, and joy, and hope break forth in their strength and lustre.

'The devil, who is the prince of darkness, and the great tyrant, delights to be served with ghastly affections; as having nothing of amiableness or excellency in him to commend himself to his worshippers. Slavery is the badge and livery of the devil's religion: hence those mys-

teries of the heathens, performed with much trembling and horror. But God, who is the supreme Goodness and Essential, both love and loveliness, takes most pleasure in those sweet and delightful affections of the soul—love, joy, and hope, which are most correspondent to his own nature. The ancient superstition of the heathens was always very nice and curious in honouring every one of their gods with sacrifices and rites most agreeable to their natures: there is no incense, no offering we can present God with, is so sweet, so acceptable to him, as our love and delight, and confidence in him; and when he comes into the souls of men, he makes these his throne, as finding the greatest agreeableness therein to his own essence. A good man that finds himself made partaker of the Divine nature, and transformed into the image of God, infinitely takes pleasure in God, as being altogether lovely, and his meditation of God is sweet unto him. St. John, that lay in the bosom of Christ, who came from the bosom of the Father, and perfectly understood his eternal essence, hath given us the fullest description that he could make of him, when he tells us, that “God is love; and he that dwells in God, dwells in love;” and, reposing himself in the bosom of an almighty Goodness, where he finds nothing but love and loveliness, he displays all the strength and beauty of those his choicest and most precious affections of love, and joy, and confidence; his soul is now at ease, and rests in peace; neither is there any thing to make afraid. He is got beyond all those powers of darkness which give such continual alarms in this lower world, and are always troubling the earth; he is got above all fears and despairs; he is in a bright clear region, above clouds and tempests. There is no frightful terribleness in the supreme Majesty. That men apprehend God in such a manner, must not be made an argument of his nature, but of our sinfulness and weakness. The sun in the heavens always was and will be a globe of light and brightness, howsoever a purblind eye is rather dazzled than enlightened by it.

There is an inward sense in man's soul, which, were it once awakened with an inward relish of the Divinity, could better define God to him than all the world else. It is the sincere Christian that so tastes and sees how good and sweet the Lord is, as none else does : "The God of hope fills him with all joy and peace in believing;" so that he "abounds in hope," as the apostle speaks : he quietly reposes himself in God; "his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord;" he is more for a solid peace, and settled calm of spirit, than for high raptures or extraordinary manifestations of God to him. He does not passionately desire, nor importunately expect such things; he rather looks after the manifestations of the goodness and power of God within him, in subduing all in his soul that is unlike and contrary to God, and forming him into his image and likeness.

Though I think it worthy of a Christian to endeavour to attain the "assurance of his own salvation;" yet, perhaps, it might be the safest way to moderate his curiosity of prying into God's book of life, and to stay a while until he sees himself within the confines of salvation itself. Should a man hear a voice from heaven, or see a vision from the Almighty, to testify unto him the love of God towards him; yet methinks it were more desirable to find a revelation of all from within, arising from the centre of a man's own soul, in the real and internal impressions of a God-like nature upon his own spirit; and thus to find the foundation and beginning of heaven and happiness within himself: it were more desirable to see the crucifying of our own will, the mortifying of the mere animal life, and to see a Divine life rising up in the room of it, as a sure pledge of immortality and happiness, the very essence of which consists in a perfect conformity and cheerful compliance of all the powers of our souls with the will of God.

The best way of securing a well-grounded assurance of the Divine love, is this, for a man to overcome himself and his own will: "To him that overcomes shall be

given that white stone, and in it the new name written, which no man knows but he that receives it." He that beholds the Sun of Righteousness arising upon his soul with healing in its wings, and chasing away all that misty darkness of his own self-will and passions; such a one desires not now the star-light to know whether it be day or not, nor cares he to pry into heaven's secrets, and to search into the hidden rolls of eternity, there to see the whole plot of his salvation; for he views it transacted upon the inward stage of his own soul; and, reflecting upon himself, he may behold a heaven opened from within, and a throne set up in his soul, and an almighty Saviour sitting upon it, and reigning within him. He now finds the kingdom of heaven within him, and sees that it is not a thing merely reserved for him without him, being already made partaker of the sweetness and efficacy of it. What the Jews say of the spirit of prophecy, may not unfitly be applied to the Holy Ghost, the true Comforter, dwelling in the minds of good men as a sure earnest of their eternal inheritance; "The Spirit resides not but upon a man of fortitude;" one that gives proof of this fortitude in subduing his own will and affections. The Holy Spirit is too pure and gentle a thing to dwell in a mind muddied and disturbed by those impure dregs, those thick fogs and mists that arise from our self-will and passions; our prevailing over these is the best way to cherish the Holy Spirit, by which we may be sealed unto the day of redemption. Yet it is a venturous and rugged conceit which some men have, that in a perfect resignation of our wills to the Divine will, a man should be content with his own damnation, and to be the subject of eternal wrath in hell, if it should so please God: which is as impossible as it is for him that infinitely thirsts after a true participation of the Divine nature, and most earnestly seeks a most inward union with God in Spirit, by a denial of himself and his own will, to swell up in self-love, pride, and arrogancy against God; the one whereof is the most substantial heaven, the other the most real

hell: whereas indeed, by conquering ourselves, we are translated from death to life, and the kingdom of God and heaven is already come into us.

CHAP. VIII.

The sixth Property or Effect discovering the Excellency of Religion, viz. That it spiritualizes material Things, and carries up the Souls of good Men from sensible and earthly Things, to Things intellectual and divine.

THE sixth property or effect wherein religion discovers its own excellency, is this, "That it spiritualizes material things, and so carries up the souls of good men from earthly things to things divine, from this sensible world to the intellectual."

God made the universe, and all the creatures contained therein, as so many glasses wherein he might reflect his own glory. He hath copied forth himself in the creation; and in this outward world we may read the lovely characters of the Divine goodness, power, and wisdom. In some creatures there are darker representations of God; there are the prints and footsteps of God; but in others there are clearer and fuller representations of the Divinity, the face and image of God. But how to find God here, and feelingly to converse with him; how to pass out of the sensible world into the intellectual, is not so effectually taught by that philosophy which professed it most, as by true religion. That which unites God and the soul together can best teach it how to ascend and descend upon those golden links that unite as it were the world to God. That Divine wisdom that contrived and beautified this glorious structure, can best explain her own art, and carry the soul back again in these reflected beams to him who is the fountain of them. Though good men, all of them, are not acquainted with those philosophical notions touching the relation between created

and uncreated being; yet may they easily find every creature pointing out to that Being whose image and superscription it bears, and climb up from those darker resemblances of the Divine wisdom and goodness shining out in different degrees upon several creatures, till they sweetly repose themselves in the bosom of the Divinity. And while they are thus conversing with this lower world, and viewing "the invisible things of God in the things that are made," they find God many times secretly flowing into their souls, and leading them silently out of the court of the temple into the holy place. But it is otherwise with wicked men; they dwell perpetually upon the dark side of the creatures, and converse with these things only in a gross, sensual, earthly manner; they are so encompassed with the thick mist of their own corruptions, that they cannot see God there where he is most visible. "The light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not." Their souls are so deeply sunk into that house of clay which they carry about them, that were there nothing of matter before them, they could find nothing to exercise themselves about.

But religion, where it is in truth and in power, renews the spirits of our minds, and doth spiritualize this outward creation to us, and in a more excellent way perform that which the Peripatetics were wont to affirm of their *intellectus agens*, in purging bodily and material things from the feculency and dregs of matter, and separating them from those circumstantiating and straitening conditions of time. It teaches the soul to look at those perfections which it finds here below, not so much as the perfections of this or that body, as they adorn this or that particular being, but as they are so many rays issuing from that first and essential perfection, in which they all meet and embrace one another in the most close friendship. Every particular good is a blossom of the first goodness; every created excellency is a beam descending from the Father of lights: and should we separate all these particularities from God, all affection spent upon

them would be unchaste, and their embraces adulterous. We should love all things in God, and God in all things, because he is all in all, the beginning and original of being, the perfect idea of their goodness, and the end of their motion. It is nothing but a thick mist of pride and self-love that hinders men's eyes from beholding that sun which both enlightens them and all things else. But when true religion begins once to dawn upon men's souls, and with its shining light chases away their black night of ignorance ; then they behold themselves and all things else enlightened by one and the same sun, and all the powers of their souls fall down before God, and ascribe all glory to him. Now it is that a good man is no more solicitous whether this or that good thing be mine, or whether my perfections exceed the measure of this or that particular creature ; for whatsoever good he beholds any where, he enjoys and delights in it as much as if it were his own, and whatever he beholds in himself he looks not upon it as his property, but as a common good ; for all these beams come from one and the same fountain and ocean of light, in whom he loves them all with an universal love. When his affections run along the stream of any created excellencies, whether his own or any one's else, yet they stay not here, but run on till they fall into the ocean ; they do not settle into a fond love and admiration either of himself or any other excellencies, but he owns them as so many pure emanations from God, and in a particular being loves the universal goodness.

Thus may a good man walk up and down the world as in a garden of spices, and suck a divine sweetness out of every flower. There is a two-fold meaning in every creature, as the Jews speak of their law, a literal and a mystical ; and the one is but the ground of the other ; and as they say of divers pieces of their law, so a good man says of every thing that offers to him ; "it speaks to his lower part, but it points out something above to his mind and spirit." It is the drowsy and muddy spirit of

superstition which, being lulled asleep in the lap of worldly delights, is fain to set some idol at its elbow, something that may jog it, and put it in mind of God. Whereas true religion never finds itself out of the infinite sphere of the Divinity, and wherever it finds beauty, harmony, goodness, love, wisdom, holiness, and justice, it is ready to say, Here and there is God. Wheresoever any such perfections shine out, an holy mind climbs up by these sun-beams to God.

And seeing God hath never thrown the world from himself, but runs through all created essence, containing all things in himself, and from thence imparting several prints of beauty and excellency all the world over; a soul that is truly God-like, a mind that is enlightened from the same fountain, and hath its inward senses affected with the sweet relishes of Divine goodness, cannot but every where behold itself in the midst of that glorious unbounded Being, who is indivisibly every where. A good man finds every place he treads upon holy ground; to him the world is God's temple; he is ready to say, with Jacob, Gen. xxviii. "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God."

CHAP. IX.

The last Property or Effect discovering the Excellency of Religion, viz. That it raiseth the Minds of good Men to a due Observance of Divine Providence, and enables them to serve the Will of God, and to acquiesce in it.

THE seventh and last property or effect wherein true religion expresseth its nobleness and excellency is this, "That it raiseth the minds of good men to a due observance of and attendance upon Divine Providence, and enables them to serve the will of God, and to acquiesce in it." Wheresoever God hath a tongue to speak, there they have ears to hear; and being attentive to God in the

soft and still motions of Providence, they are ready to obey his call, and to say, with Isaiah, "Behold, here am I, send me." They endeavour to copy forth that lesson which Christ hath set Christians, seriously considering that they came into this world by God's appointment, not to do their own wills, but the will of him that sent them.

As this consideration quiets the spirit of a good man, who is no idle spectator of Providence, and keeps him calm in the midst of all storms; so it makes him most freely engage himself in the service of Providence, without any inward reluctance. He cannot be content that Providence should serve itself of him, as it doth even of those things that understand it not; but it is his holy ambition to serve it. It is nothing else but hellish pride and self-love that makes men serve themselves, and so set up themselves as idols against God. But it is an argument of true nobleness of spirit for a man to view himself (not in the narrow point of his own being, but) in the unbounded essence of the First Cause, so as to live only as an instrument in the hands of God, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

To a good man to serve the will of God is, in the truest and best sense, to serve himself, who knows himself to be nothing without or in opposition to God. This is the most divine life that can be, for a man to act in the world upon eternal designs, and to be so wholly devoted to the will of God as to serve it most faithfully and entirely. This indeed bestows a kind of immortality upon these transient acts of ours, which in themselves are but the offspring of a moment. A pillar or verse is a poor monument of any exploit, which yet may well become the highest of the world's bravery. But good men, while they work with God, and bring themselves and all their actions to a unity with God, his ends and designs enrol themselves in eternity. This is the proper character of holy souls; their wills are so fully resolved into the Divine will, that they in all things subscribe to it without any murmuring or debates. They rest well satisfied with,

and take complacency in, any passages of Divine dispensation, as being ordered and disposed by a mind and wisdom above, according to the highest rules of goodness.

The best way for a man rightly to enjoy himself, is to maintain an universal and cheerful compliance with the Divine will in all things; as knowing that nothing can flow forth from the fountain of goodness but that which is good; and therefore a good man is never offended with any Divine dispensation, nor hath he any reluctance against that will that determines all things by an eternal rule of goodness, as knowing that there is an unbounded and almighty love, that, without any disdain or envy, freely communicates itself to every thing he hath made: that feeds even the young ravens that call upon him; that makes his sun to shine, and his rain to fall, both upon the just and unjust; that always enfolds those in his everlasting arms who are made partakers of his own image, perpetually nourishing and cherishing them with the fresh and vital influences of his grace; as knowing, also, that there is an all-seeing eye, an unbounded mind and understanding, that derives itself through the whole universe, and sitting in all the wheels of motion, guides them all, and powerfully governs the most eccentrical motions of creatures, and carries them all most harmoniously in their several orbs to one last end. Who then shall give law to God? "Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?" Where is he that would climb up into the great consistory in heaven, and sitting in consultation with the Almighty, instruct the infinite and incomprehensible Wisdom? Shall vain man be wiser than his Maker? This is the hellish temper of wicked men, they examine and judge of all things by the measure of their own will, their own opinions and designs; and measuring all things by a crooked rule, they think nothing to be straight; and therefore they fall out with God, and with restless impatience fret and vex themselves; and this fretfulness and

impatiency argues a breach in the constitution of their minds and spirits.

But a good man, whose soul is restored to that frame and constitution it should be in, has better apprehensions of the ways and works of God, and is better affected under the various disposals of Providence. Indeed, to a superficial observer of Divine Providence, many things there are that seem to be digressions from the main end of all, and to come to pass by a fortuitous concourse of circumstances, that come in so abruptly and without any dependance one upon another, as if they were without any mind or understanding to guide them. But a wise man, that looks from the beginning to the end of things, beholds them all in their due place acting that part which the Supreme Mind and Wisdom, that governs all things, hath appointed them, carrying on one and the same eternal design, while they move according to their inclinations and measures, and aim at their own particular ends. To be subservient unto Providence is the holy ambition and great endeavour of a good man, who is so perfectly overpowered with the love of the universal and infinite goodness, that he would not serve any particular good whatsoever; no, not himself, so as to set up in the world and trade for himself, as the men of the world do who are “lovers of their own selves, and lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”

CHAP. X.

IV. *The Excellency of Religion in Regard of its Progress, as it is perpetually carrying on the Soul towards Perfection. Every Nature hath its proper Centre, which it hastens to. Sin and Wickedness are within the attractive Power of Hell, and hasten thither: Grace and Holiness are within the central Force of Heaven, and move thither. It is not the Speculation of Heaven, as a Thing to come, that satisfies the Desires of religious Souls, but the real Possession of it, even in this Life.*

We have considered the excellency of true religion, 1. In regard of its descent and original : 2. In regard of its nature : 3. In regard of its properties and effects. We proceed now to shew,

That religion is a generous and noble thing, in regard of its progress; it is perpetually carrying on that mind, in which it is once seated, towards perfection. Though the first appearance of it upon the souls of good men may be but as the wings of the morning, spreading themselves upon the mountains, yet it is still rising higher and higher upon them, chasing away all the mists and vapours of sin before it, till it arrives to its meridian altitude. There is the strength and force of the Divinity in it; and though, when it first enters into the minds of men, it may seem to be “sown in weakness,” yet it will raise itself “in power.” As Christ was in his bodily appearance, still increasing in wisdom and knowledge and favour with God and man, until he was perfected in glory; so is he also in his spiritual appearance in the souls of men; and accordingly the New Testament does more than once distinguish of Christ in his several ages and degrees of growth in the souls of all true Christians. Good men are always walking on from strength to strength, till at last they see God in Zion. Religion, though it hath its infancy, yet it hath no old age: while it is in its minority, it is always in motion; but when it comes to its maturity and full age, it will always be at rest: it is then always the same, and its years fail not, but it shall endure for ever. Holy and religious souls being once touched with an inward sense of Divine beauty and goodness, by a strong impress upon them, are moved swiftly after God, and (as the apostle expresses himself,) “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, they press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Where a spirit of religion is, there is the force of heaven itself enlivening those that are informed by it in

their motions toward heaven. As on the other side, all unhallowed and defiled minds are within the attractive power of hell, and are continually hastening their course thither, being strongly pressed down by the weight of their wickedness. Every nature in this world hath some proper centre which it is always hastening to. Sin and wickedness do not hover a little over the bottomless pit of hell, and only flutter about; but they are continually sinking lower and lower into it. Neither does true grace make some feeble assays towards heaven, but by a mighty energy within itself, it is always soaring up higher and higher into heaven. A good Christian does not only court his happiness, and cast now and then a smile upon it, or satisfy himself merely to be contracted to it; but with the greatest ardour of love and desire he pursues the solemnity of the just nuptials, that he may be wedded to it, and made one with it. It is not an airy speculation of heaven, as a thing (though never so undoubtedly,) to come, that can satisfy his desires, but the real possession of it even in this life. Such an happiness would be less in the esteem of good men, that was only to be enjoyed at the end of this life, when all other enjoyments fail him.

I wish there be not among some such a poor esteem of heaven, as makes them more to seek after assurance of heaven in the idea of it as a thing to come, than after heaven itself; which indeed we can never well be assured of, until we find it rising up within ourselves and glorifying our own souls. When true assurance comes, heaven itself will appear upon our souls, like a morning light, chasing away all our dark and gloomy doubtings before it. We shall not need then to light candles to seek for it in corners; no, it will display its own lustre so before us, that we may see it in its own light, and ourselves the true possessors of it. We may be too nice and vain in seeking for signs and tokens of Christ's spiritual appearance in the souls of men, as well

as the Scribes and Pharisees were in seeking for them at his first appearance in the world. When he comes into us, let us expect, until the works that he shall do within us, may testify of him ; and be not over-credulous, until we find that he doth those works there which none other could do. As for a true, well-grounded assurance, say not so much, "Who shall ascend up into heaven," to fetch it down from thence ? Or, "who shall descend into the deep," to fetch it up from beneath ? For in the growth of true internal goodness, and in the progress of true religion, it will freely unfold itself within us. Stay until the grain of mustard-seed breaks forth from among the clods that buried it, until, through the descent of the heavenly dew, it sprouts up and discovers itself openly. This holy assurance is indeed the budding and blossoming of felicity in our own souls. It is the inward sense and feeling of the true life, spirit, sweetness, and beauty of grace, powerfully expressing its own energy within us.

Briefly, true religion, in the progress of it, transforms those minds in which it reigns from glory to glory. It goes on and prospers in bringing all enemies in subjection under their feet, in reconciling the minds of men fully to God ; and it instates them in a firm possession of the supreme good. This is the seed of God within holy souls, which is always warring against the seed of the serpent, until it prevail over it through the Divine strength and influence. Though hell may open her mouth wide, and without measure, yet a true Christian, in whom the seed of God remaineth, is in a good and safe condition ; he finds himself borne up by an almighty arm, and carried upwards as upon eagles' wings ; and the evil one hath no power over him, or, as St. John expresseth it, "the evil one touches him not," 1 Epistle v. 18.

CHAP. XI.

V *The Excellency of Religion in regard of its Term and End, viz. perfect Blessedness. How unable we are in this State to comprehend the full State of Happiness and Glory to come. The more God-like a Christian is, the better may he understand that State. A serious Exhortation to a diligent minding of Religion.*

WE come now to the fifth and last particular, viz. the excellency of religion in the end of it, which is blessedness in its full maturity. Which yet I may not here undertake to explain, for it is altogether inexpressible. Accordingly, St. John tells us, “It does not yet appear what we shall be:” and that he may give us some glimpse of it, he points us to God, and tells us, “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” Indeed the best way to get a discovery of it, is to endeavour as much as may be to be God-like, to live in a feeling converse with God, and in a powerful exercise of all God-like dispositions. So shall our inner man be best enabled to know the breadth and length, the depth and height of that love and goodness which yet passeth knowledge. There is a state of perfection in the life to come so far transcendent to any in this life, that we are not able from hence to take the just proportion of it. We are unable to comprehend the vastness and fulness of that happiness which the most purified souls may be raised to, or to apprehend how far the mighty power of the Divinity, deriving itself into a created being, may communicate life and blessedness to it. We know not what latent powers our souls may here contain within themselves, which then may begin to open and dilate themselves to let in the full streams of the Divine goodness, when they come nearly and intimately to converse with it; or how blessedness may act upon those faculties of our minds which we now have. We know not what illapses and irradiations there may be from God upon souls in glory,

that may raise them into a state of perfection surpassing all our imaginations.

The highest pleasure of spirits does not consist in the relieving of them from any antecedent pains or grief, or in a relaxation from some former molesting passion. Neither is their happiness a mere negative thing, rendering it free from all disturbance or molestation, quiet within itself. A spirit is too full of activity and energy, is too quick and potent a thing to enjoy complete happiness in a mere cessation ; this were to make happiness an heavy spiritless thing. The philosopher hath well observed, that there is infinite power and strength in Divine joy, pleasure and happiness commensurate to that almighty being and goodness which is the eternal source of it.

As created beings, that are capable of conversing with God, stand nearer to God, or further off from him, as they partake more or less of his likeness ; so they partake more or less of that happiness which flows from him, and God communicates himself in different degrees to them. There may be as many degrees of perfection, as there are conditions of creatures. True positive sanctity comes to be advanced higher and higher, as any creature comes more to partake of the life of God, and to be brought into a nearer conjunction with God. And so the sanctity and happiness of innocency itself might have been perfected.

Thus we see how true religion carries up the souls of good men above the black regions of hell and death. This indeed is the great restoration of souls, it is religion itself, or a real participation of God and his holiness, which is their true restitution and advancement. All that happiness which good men shall be made partakers of, as it cannot be borne up on any other foundation than true goodness and a God-like nature within them ; so neither is it distinct from it. Sin and hell are so twined together, that if the power of sin be once dissolved, the bonds of death and hell will also fall asunder.

Sin and hell are of the same kind, of the same lineage and descent. As, on the other side, true holiness, or religion and true happiness, are but two several notions of one thing, rather than distinct in themselves. Religion delivers us from hell by instating us in a possession of true life and bliss. Hell is rather a nature than a place: and heaven cannot be so truly defined by any thing without us, as by something that is within us.

The use we shall make of all shall be this, to exhort every one to a serious minding of religion: as Solomon doth earnestly exhort every one to seek after true wisdom, which is the same with religion as sin is with folly; Prov. iv. 5, "Get wisdom, get understanding;" and, ver. 7, "Get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. Wisdom is the principal thing." This is the sum of all, "the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole (duty, business, and concernment) of man. Let us not trifle away our time and opportunities, wherein we may lay hold upon life and immortality, in doing nothing, or else pursuing hell and death. Let us awake out of our vain dreams. Wisdom calls upon us, and offers us the hidden treasures of life and blessedness. Let us not perpetually deliver over ourselves to laziness and slumbering. Say not, "There is a lion in the way;" say not, though religion be good, yet it is unattainable. No, but let us intend all our powers in a serious pursuance of it, and depend upon the assistance of heaven, which never fails those that soberly seek for it. It is the levity of men's spirits, their heedlessness and regardlessness of their own lives, that betrays them to sin and death. It is the general practice of men to live *extempore*; they deliberate upon every thing more than how it becomes them to live; they so live as if their bodies had swallowed up their souls. Their lives are but a kind of lottery. The principles by which they are guided are nothing else but a confused multitude of fancies rudely jumbled together. Such is the life of most men, it is a mere casual thing

ected over at peradventure, without any fair and calm debates held either with religion, or with reason, which within itself, not disturbed and depraved by corrupt men, is a true friend to religion, and directs men to God and things good and just, pure, lovely, and praise-worthy; and the directions of this inward guide we are not to neglect. Unreasonableness, or the extinguishing the candle of the Lord within us, is no piece of religion, nor advantageous to it. That certainly will not raise men up to God, which sinks them below men. There had never been such an apostasy from religion, nor had such a mystery of iniquity, (full of deceivableness and imposture,) been revealed and wrought so powerfully in the souls of some men, had there not first come an apostasy from sober reason, had there not first been a falling away from natural truth.

It is to be feared, our nice speculations in theology have tended more to exercise men's wits than to reform their lives; and that they have tended rather to take men off from religion, than to quicken them to a diligent seeking after it. Though the powers of nature may now be weakened, and though we cannot produce living religion in our own souls; yet we are not resolved so into a sluggish passiveness, that we cannot seek after it. Certainly a man may as well read the Scriptures as study a piece of natural philosophy. He that can observe any thing comely and commendable, or unworthy and base, in another man, may also reflect upon himself, and see how "face answers to face." If men would seriously commune with their hearts, their own consciences would tell them plainly, that they might avoid more evil than they do, and that they might do more good. And that they do not put forth that power God hath given them, nor faithfully use those talents, nor improve the advantages and means offered them.

I fear the ground of most men's misery will prove to be a second fall, and a lapse upon a lapse. I doubt God

will not allow that proverb, “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge,” as not in respect of temporal misery, much less in respect of eternal. It will not be so much because our first parents incurred God’s displeasure, as because we have neglected what might have been done by us in order to the seeking of God, his face and favour, while he might be found.

Up then, and be doing ; and the Lord will be with us. He will not leave us nor forsake us, if we seriously set ourselves about the work. Let us endeavour to acquaint ourselves with our own lives, and the true rules of life. Let us inform our minds, as much as may be, in the excellency and loveliness of practical religion ; that, beholding it in its own beauty and amiableness, we may the more sincerely close with it. As there would need nothing else to deter men from sin, but its own deformity, were it presented to a naked view : so nothing would more effectually commend religion to men, than the excellencies of its nature ; neither the evening nor the morning star could so sensibly commend themselves to our bodily eyes, and delight them with their shining beauties, as true religion, which is an undefiled beam of the uncreated light, would to a mind capable of conversing with it. “Religion,” which is the true wisdom, “is a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty, the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness : she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars ; being compared with the light, she is found before it ?”

Religion is no such austere, sour, and rigid thing, as to affright men away from it. No, but those that are acquainted with the power of it, find it to be altogether sweet and amiable. An holy soul sees so much of the glory of religion, as both woos and wins it. We may truly say concerning religion, to such souls, as St. Paul spake to the Corinthians, “Needs it any epistles of com-

mendation to you?" Needs it any thing to court your affections? "Ye are indeed its epistle, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God."

Religion is not like the prophet's roll, sweet when it was in his mouth, but bitter in his belly. Religion is no sullen stoicism, no sour pharisaism; it does not consist in melancholy passions, in dejected looks, or depressions of mind: but it consists in freedom, love, peace, life, and power; the more it comes to be digested into our lives, the more sweet and lovely we find it. Those spots and wrinkles which corrupt minds think they see in the face of religion, are no where else but in their own mis-shapen apprehensions. It is no wonder when a defiled fancy comes to be the glass, if you have an unlovely reflection. Let us therefore labour to purge our own souls from all worldly pollutions; let us breathe after the assistance of the Divine Spirit, that it may irradiate and enlighten our minds, that we may be able to see Divine things in a Divine light. Let us endeavour to live more in a real practice of those rules of religious and holy living commended to us by our ever-blessed Lord and Saviour: so shall we know religion better, and knowing it love it, and loving it be still more and more ambitiously pursuing after it, till we come to a full attainment of it, and therein of our own perfection and everlasting bliss.

A

CHRISTIAN'S
CONFLICTS AND CONQUESTS;
OR,
A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE DEVIL'S CONTINUAL HOSTILITY AGAINST MAN;
THE WARFARE OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE;
THE CERTAINTY OF SUCCESS IN THIS SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

SIRACIDES, Cap. 2, 1.

Τεκνο, ει προσερχη διλευειν Κυριω, ετοιμασον την Φυχην Κα εις
πειρασμον.

Cap. 36, 1.

Τη φοβημενω Κυριον ουχ απαθητει κακον, αλλ' ει πειρασμω και
παλιν εξελειται.

CYPRIANUS *De Zelo et Livore.*

Excubandum est, Fratres dilectissimi, atque omnibus viribus elabordandum, ut inimico sœvienti, et jacula sua in omnes corporis partes, quibus percuti et vulnerari possumus, dirigenti, sollicita et plena vigilantia, repugnemus—Quamobrem contra omnes Diaboli vel fallaces insidias vel apertas nimas stare debet instructus animus et armatus, tam paratus semper ad repugnandum quam est ad impugnandum semper paratus inimicus

A

CHRISTIAN'S
CONFLICTS AND CONQUESTS,
REPRESENTED
IN A DISCOURSE UPON JAMES IV 7

“ Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

CHAP. I.

The Introduction, summarily treating of the perpetual Enmity between God, the Principle of Good, and the Principle of Evil, the Devil: as also between whatsoever is from God, and that which is from the Devil.

IT hath been an ancient tradition among philosophers, that there are two main principles that spread their influence through the whole universe: the one they called the principle of good, the other the principle of evil; and that these two maintain a continual contest the one with the other. The principle of goodness, which is nothing else but God himself, who derived himself in clear and lovely impressions of beauty and goodness through the whole creation, endeavours still to assimilate and unite it to himself. And, on the other side, the

principle of evil, the prince of darkness, having once stained the original beauty and glory of the Divine workmanship, is continually striving to mould and shape it more and more into his own likeness. And as there is such a perpetual and active enmity between God and the evil spirit, so whatsoever is from God is perpetually opposing and warring against that which arises from the devil. The Divine goodness hath put enmity between whatsoever is born of him or flows from itself, and the seed of the serpent. As at the beginning he divided between the night and the day, between light and darkness, so that they can never be reconciled one to the other ; so neither can those beams of Divine light and love which descend from God upon the souls of men be ever reconciled to those mists of sin and darkness which ascend out of the bottomless pit. That spirit is not from God, who is the father of lights, and in whom there is no darkness, as the apostle speaks, which endeavours to compound with hell, and to accommodate between God and the devil. God himself hath set the bounds to darkness and the shadow of death. Divine truth and goodness cannot contract themselves with any thing that is from hell : as it was set forth in the emblem under the old law, where none of the holy seed might marry with the people of any strange god.

He that will entertain any correspondence with the devil, or receive upon his soul his image or the number of his name, must first strip himself of all that hath any alliance to God or true goodness within him. He must transform his mind into the true likeness of those fiends of darkness, and abandon all relation to the highest good. And yet though some men endeavour to do this, and to smother all those impressions of light and reason which God hath folded up in every man's being, and destroy all that is from God within them, that so they may reconcile themselves to sin and hell ; yet they can never make any just peace with them : "there is no peace to the wicked,

but they are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest.” Those evil spirits are always turbulent and restless; and though they maintain continually a war with God and his kingdom, yet are they always making disturbances in their own kingdom; and the more they contest with God, and are deprived of him, the more full are they of horror and tumultuous commotions within. Nothing can stand firm and sure, nothing can have any true and quiet establishment, that hath not the everlasting arms of true goodness under it to support it. And as those that deliver over themselves most to the devil’s pleasure, and devote themselves most to his service, cannot do it without a secret inward antipathy against him, or dreadful thoughts of him; so neither can those impure spirits stand before the Divine glory, but being filled with trembling and horror continually endeavour to hide themselves from it, and flee away before it as the darkness flies away before the light. And according as God hath in any places, in any ages of the world, made any manifestation of himself to men, so have those evil spirits been vanquished, and forced to quit their former territories; as is very observable in the ceasing of all the Grecian oracles soon after the gospel was promulgated in those parts, when those desolate spirits, with horrid and dismal groans, resigned up their habitations, as Plutarch hath recorded of them.

Our Saviour found by good experience, how weak a thing the devil’s kingdom is, when he “spoiled all the principalities and powers of darkness, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross.” And if we will resolutely follow the Captain of our salvation, and fight under his banner, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we have full security given us for the same success: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

CHAP. II.

That the Devil is continually busy with us. The Devil considered under a double Notion. 1. As an apostate Spirit which fell from God. The great Danger of the Devil's Activity, not only when he presents himself in some corporeal Shape, but when he is unseen.

IN these words, “resist the devil, and he will flee from you,” we shall take notice first, of what is evidently implied, viz. That the devil is continually busy with us. This may be considered under a double notion.

1. By the devil we are to understand that apostate spirit who fell from God, and is always designing to hale down others from God also. The old dragon (mentioned in the Revelation) with his tail drew down the third part of the stars of heaven. As true goodness is not content to be happy alone, so neither can sin and wickedness be content to be miserable alone. The evil spirit told God himself what his employment was, viz. “To go to and fro in the earth, and to walk up and down in it.” He is always walking up and down through dry places, (where no Divine influences fall to water it,) as our Saviour speaks, seeking rest, though always restless. The philosophy of the ancients hath observed, that every man that comes into this world, hath a good and an evil genius attending upon him. It were perhaps a vain curiosity to inquire whether the number of evil spirits exceed the number of men; but this is too certain, that we never want the secret attendance of them. The devil is not only a word or a name made to affright timorous men: neither are we then only in danger of him, when he presents himself to us in some corporeal form. It is a superstitious weakness to be afraid of him only when he appears, and to neglect that unseen and insensible influence which his continual converse with us may have upon us. Those evil spirits are not yet cast out of the world into outer darkness, though it be prepared

for them ; the bottomless pit hath not yet shut its mouth upon them. They fell from God not so much by a local descent, as by a mental apostasy and dissimilitude to God. And they have all this habitable world for their rendezvous, and are styled by the apostle “ spiritual wickednesses in high places.” Wheresoever there are any in a disposition to sin against God, wheresoever there are any capable of a temptation or diabolical impression, there are they. A man needs not dig into the chambers of death, or search among the shadows of darkness to find them ; he needs not go down into hell to seek them, or use any magical charms to raise them up from thence. No, those wicked spirits are always wandering up and down amongst us, seeking whom they may devour. As there is a good spirit conversant in the world, inviting and alluring men to virtue, so there is an evil spirit perpetually tempting and enticing men to vice. Unclothed and unbodied natures may converse with us by secret illapses, while we are not aware of them. I doubt not that there are many more impressions made upon the minds of men, both good and bad, from the good Spirit of God, than are ordinarily observed ; there are many soft and silent impulses, gentle motions, like our Saviour’s putting in his hand by the hole of the door, as it is in the Canticles, soliciting and exciting men to religion and holiness ; which they many times regard not, and take little notice of.

There are such secret messages often brought from heaven to the souls of men by an unknown and unseeu hand, as the Psalmist speaks ; “ Once, yea twice have I heard it, that power belongeth unto God,” And as there are such Divine irradiations sliding into the souls of men from God ; so there is no question many suggestions to the imaginations of men arising from the evil spirit ; and a watchful observer of his own heart and life, shall often hear the voice of wisdom and the voice of folly speaking to him. He that hath his eyes opened, may see both the visions of God falling upon him, and discern the fires of satan that would draw away his mind from God. This is

our unhappiness, that the devil is so near us, and we see him not ; he is conversant with us, and we are not aware of him. Those are the most desperate designs, and likeliest to take effect, that are carried on by an unseen enemy ; and if we will provide ourselves against the devil, who never misseth any opportunity to tempt us, we must have our “senses exercised to discern both good and evil ;” we must get our minds awakened with clear and evident principles of light ; we must get our judgments and consciences well informed with sober and practical truth, such as tends to make us most like to God, and to reconcile our natures more perfectly to Divine goodness. Then shall we know and discover that apostate spirit in all his stratagems whereby he seeks to bereave us of our happiness. We shall know him as well when he clothes himself like an angel of light, as when he appears in his own nakedness and deformity. It is observed by some, that God never suffered the devil to assume any human shape, but with some character whereby his body might be distinguished from the true body of a man. And surely the devil cannot so exactly counterfeit an angel of light, but that by a discerning mind he may be distinguished from him ; as they say a beggar can never act a prince so cunningly, but that his behaviour sometimes sliding into the way of his education, will betray his pedigree to one of a true noble extraction. A bare imitation will always fall short of the copy from whence it is taken ; and though sin and error may take up the mantle of truth and clothe themselves with it, yet he that is inwardly acquainted with truth, and an ingenuous lover and pursuer of it, will be able to find out the imposture, and to see through the veil into the naked deformity of them.

CHAP. III.

Of the Activity of the Devil, considered as a Spirit of Apostasy, and as a degenerate Nature in Men.

WHEN we say “the devil is continually busy with us,”

I mean not only some apostate spirit as one particular being, but that spirit of apostasy which is lodged in all men's natures ; and this may seem particularly to be aimed at in this place, if we observe the context ; as the scripture speaks of Christ not only as a particular person, but as a Divine principle in holy souls.

Indeed the devil is not only the name of one particular thing, but a nature. He is not only one particular being designed to torment wicked men in the world to come, but a hellish and diabolical nature seated in the minds of men. He is not only one apostate spirit fallen down from heaven, out of the lap of blessedness ; but also a spirit of apostasy, a degenerate and depraved nature. Could the devil change his foul and impure nature, he would neither be a devil nor miserable ; and so long as any man carries about him a sinful and corrupt nature, he can neither be in perfect favour with God, nor blessed. Wheresoever we see malice, revenge, pride, envy, hatred, self-will, and self-love, we may say here, and there is that evil spirit. This indeed is the poison and sting too of that diabolical nature ; as the kingdom of heaven is not so much without men as within, so the tyranny of the devil and hell is not so much in external things, as in the dispositions of men's minds. And as the enjoying of God and conversing with him consists not so much "in a change of place, as in a participation of the Divine nature," so our conversing with the devil is not so much by a local presence as by a wicked nature derived upon men's souls. Therefore the Jews were wont to style that original pravity that is lodged in men's spirits, "The angel of death." Those filthy lusts and corruptions which men entertain in their minds, are the noisome vapours that ascend out of the bottomless pit ; they are the thick mists and fogs of hellish darkness arising in their souls, as a preface and introduction of hell and death within. Where we find uncleanness, intemperance, covetousness, or any such impure or unhallowed behaviour, we may say, Here satan's throne is.

This sinful nature being the true issue of hell itself, is continually dragging down men's souls thither. All wickedness in man's spirit hath the energy of hell in it, and is perpetually pressing down towards it as towards its own place. There needs no fatal necessity or astral impulses to tumble wicked men forcibly into hell ; no, for sin itself, hastened by the mighty weight of its own nature, carries them down thither with the most headlong motion. Sin hath no other extraction than may be derived from those unclean spirits that are nestled in hell. All men in reality converse either with God or with the devil, and walk in the confines either of heaven or of hell ; they have their fellowship either with the Father and the Son, as St. John speaks, or else with the apostate and evil angels.

I know these expressions will seem to some very harsh and unwholesome. But I would beseech them to consider what they will call that spirit of malice and envy, that spirit of pride, ambition, vain-glory, covetousness, injustice, uncleanness, that commonly reigns and acts in the minds and lives of men. Let us speak the truth, and call things by their own names ; let us not flatter ourselves, or paint our filthy sores ; so much as there is of sin in any man, so much there is of the diabolical nature. Why do we defy the devil with our tongues, while we entertain him in our hearts ? Men do but quarrel with him in the name of him, while their hearts can readily comply with all that which the devil is ; their hatred of the devil is nothing else but an inward dislascency against something entitled by the devil's name. Or else at best, corrupt minds do nothing else but fashion out a God and a devil, a heaven and a hell, to themselves, by the power of their own fancies. And so they are to them nothing else but their own creatures, supported by the force of their own imaginations which first raised them. And as they commonly make a God like to themselves, such a one as they can best comply with and love ; so they make a devil most unlike to themselves, which may be any thing but what they themselves are, that so they may most freely spend their anger and hatred upon him. Just

as they say of some of the Ethiopians, who use to paint the devil white, because they themselves are black. They may thus cheat themselves for awhile, but the eternal foundation of the Divine Being is unchangeable. God is but One, and his name One, as the prophet speaks, howsoever the fancies of men may shape him out diversly ; and where we find wisdom, justice, loveliness, goodness, love, and glory, in their highest elevations and most unbounded dimensions, that is He ; and where we find any true participations of these, there is a true communication of God ; and a defection from these is the essence of sin and the foundation of hell.

Now if this be rightly considered, I hope there will an argument strong enough appear from the thing itself, to enforce St. James's exhortation, "Resist the devil ;" endeavour to mortify and crucify the old man, with all corrupt lusts and affections.

We never so truly hate sin as when we hate it for its own deformity ; as we never love God so truly as when we love him for his own beauty and excellency. If we calculate aright, we shall find nothing better than God himself, for which we should love him ; so neither shall we find any thing worse than sin itself, for which we should hate it. Our assimilation to God and conformity to him, instates us in a firm possession of true happiness, which is nothing else but God himself, who is all-being and blessedness ; and our dissimilitude to God, and apostasy from him, involves us in our own misery, and sets us at the greatest enmity to what our unsatiable desires most of all crave for, which is the enjoyment of true and satisfying good. Sins are fiery snakes, which will eternally lash and torment all damned spirits : every man's hell arises from the bottom of his own soul ; as those tempestuous exhalations that infest the earth have their first original from the earth itself. Hell is not so much induced as educed out of men's filthy lusts and passions. Eternal death is begotten and brought forth out of the womb of lust, and is little else but sin consummated.

Would wicked men dwell a little more at home, and descend into the bottom of their own hearts, they should soon find hell opening her mouth wide upon them, and those secret fires of inward fury and displeasure breaking out upon them, which might fully inform them of the estate of true misery, as being a short anticipation of it. But in this life, wicked men, for the most part, elude their own misery for a time, and seek to avoid the dreadful sentence of their own consciences, by flying from themselves into a converse with other things, else they would soon find their own home too hot for them. But while men's minds are perpetually rambling all the world over in a pursuit of worldly designs, they are unacquainted with the affairs of their own souls; and know not how a reflection upon their own prodigious deformities would pierce their souls with anguish; how vastly they would swell with fury, rage, horror, consternation, and whatsoever is contrary to that ineffable light, and love, and peace, which is in heaven, in natures fully reconciled to true goodness! As true goodness cannot borrow beauty from any external thing to recommend itself to the affections of good men, seeing itself is the very life of all beauty and perfection, the source of bliss and peace to all that partake of her; so neither can sin and wickedness to an enlightened soul appear more ugly, loathsome, and hateful, in any other shape than its own.

CHAP. IV.

The Second Observable, viz. The Warfare of a Christian Life. True Religion consists not in a mere passive Capacity, and sluggish kind of doing nothing, nor in a melancholy sitting still, or slothful waiting, but in inward Life, and Power, Vigour and Activity. Of the Quality and Nature of the true spiritual Warfare, and of the Manner and Method of it.

FROM these words, resist the devil, we may take notice of the warfare of a Christian life, of that active life and

valour which good men express in this world. A true christian spirit is masculine and generous ; it is no such poor sluggish thing, which some men fancy, but active and noble. “We fight not,” saith the apostle, “against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places.” True religion does not consist in a mere passive capacity, in a sluggish kind of doing nothing, that so God might do all ; but in life and power within ; therefore, it is called by the apostle, “The spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind ; the law of the spirit of life,” strongly enabling good men against “the law of sin and death.” True wisdom, as the wise man hath well styled it, is “the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty ; neither can any defiled thing enter into it.” It goes in and out in the strength of God himself ; and, “as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” Every thing, as it partakes more of God, and comes nearer to him, so it becomes more active and lively, as making the nearer approaches to the fountain of life and virtue. A good man doth not only then move, when there is some powerful “impression and impulse upon him,” but he hath a spring of perpetual motion within. When God restores men to a new and Divine life, he doth not make them like so many dead instruments, stringing and fitting them, which yet are able to yield no sound of themselves, but he puts a living harmony within them. That is but a mechanical religion, which moves no longer than some external weights and impulses are upon it ; whether those be from some worldly thing, or from God himself, while he acts upon men, from without them, and not from within them. It is not a melancholy kind of sitting still, and slothful waiting, that speaks men, enlivened by the spirit and power of God. It is not religion, to stifle and smother those active powers that are within us, or to dry up the fountain of inward life and virtue. How say some amongst us, that there is no resurrection from the dead—no spirit of life within ?

but all our motions in religion are merely from some assisting form without? Good men do not walk up and down the world merely like ghosts and shadows, or like dead bodies, assumed by some spirit, which are taken up and laid down again by him at his pleasure; but they are living men, by a real participation from him who is a quickening Spirit. Were our religion so much a thing without us, as some men would seem to fancy; were we so dead and lifeless, that we could never move, but from an external force; as our religion could never, indeed, be called ours, so neither could we ever have the inward sense of that bliss and peace which goes along with it, but must be like so many heavy logs, or dull pieces of earth, in heaven and happiness. That is a very earthly and flat spirit in religion, which sinks, like the lees, to the bottom. We know the pedigree of those exhalations, that arise no higher than a mere external force from the sun's heat, which weigheth them up, to be but base and earthly; and therefore, having no natural warmth or energy within themselves, sink down again to the earth from whence they came. The spirit which is from heaven, is always, out of an inbred nobleness which bears it up, carried upwards again towards heaven, powerfully resisting all things that would deprive it of God, or hinder it from returning to its original; it is always moving upwards, in an even and steady way towards God, from whence it came, leaving the dark regions of hell and death under it. It resists hell and darkness by conforming itself to God; it resists darkness in the armour of light; it resists death and destruction, by the power of Divine love. It must be something of heaven, in the minds of men, which resists the devil and hell.

We do not always resist the devil when we bid him defiance, or when we declaim most zealously against him; neither does our resisting and opposing sin consist in the violence of some passions, which may sometimes be raised by the power of fancy against it; it consists rather in a mature and sedate resolution against it, in our own

souls, arising from a clear judgment of the foul and hateful nature of sin itself, and him who is the patron of it ; in a constant and serious endeavour of settling the government of our souls, and establishing the principality of grace and peace within ourselves. There is a pompous and popular kind of tumult in the world, which sometimes goes for zeal for God and his kingdom against the devil ; when men's own pride and passions disguise themselves under the notions of a religious fervency. Some men think themselves the greatest champions for God and his cause, when they can take the greatest liberty to quarrel with every thing which is not shaped according to the mould of their own opinions, their own will, humour, and interest : whereas, indeed, this spiritual warfare is not so much maintained against a foreign enemy, as against those domestic rebellions that are within ; neither is it carried on most successfully, when men make the greatest noise, and most of all raise the dust. That impetuous violence and tempestuousness with which men are acted, in pretensions of religion, arises ordinarily, I doubt, from unquiet minds within ; whereas, it is indeed, inward commotion, sin and vice, and not a holy zeal, which discomposes the minds of men. Sin, where it is entertained, will breed disturbance, and break the peace of a man's own spirit ; but a true resisting and opposing it, is the restoring the soul to its just consistency, freedom, and serenity. As God's kingdom is set up, so the devil's kingdom may be pulled down, without the noise of axes and hammers. We may then attain to the greatest achievements against the gates of hell and death, when we most possess our souls in patience, and collect our minds into the most peaceful, composed, and united temper. As true religion is no lazy or sluggish thing, but in perpetual motion, so all the motions of it are soft and gentle ; while it acts most powerfully, it acts most peacefully. The kingdom of heaven comes not with observation, that men may say, " Lo here, or lo there !" it is not with the devouring fire coming after it, or a whirl-

wind going before it. This fight and contest with sin and satan, is not to be known by the rattling of chariots, or the sound of an alarm : it is transacted upon the inner stage of men's souls and spirits, and is rather a quieting all those riots and tumults raised there by sin and satan ; it is a reconciling the minds of men to truth, justice, and holiness ; it is a captivating and subjecting all our powers and faculties to God and true goodness, through the effectual working of a Divine love and humility ; and this resistance is always attended with victory.

CHAP. V

The Certainty of Success and Victory to all those that resist the Devil.

Obser. 3. The certainty of success to all that resist the devil. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." He cannot stand, when opposed in the strength of God ; he will fall down as swift as lightning ; he cannot bear the glory of God shining in the souls of men : here it is no more, but "Stand, and conquer; resist, and vanquish."

For first of all, the devil and sin in themselves are but weak and impotent ; they cannot prevail over that soul which yields not to them ; the evil spirit then only prevails over us, when we ourselves consent to his suggestions ; all his strength lies in our treachery and falseness to our own souls. Though those wicked spirits be perpetually so near us, yet they cannot bow or bend our wills. There is a place of defence in the souls of men, into which they cannot enter ; they may stand at a distance, allure and entice them, but they cannot prevail over them, except they deliver over their strength into the enemy's hand. It is, indeed, nothing but hell itself, in the souls of men, that gives the devil such free entertainment there : the wills of men, stamped with a diabolical form, and bearing the devil's image, declare his right

over them : men are, therefore, so much captivated by him, because they voluntarily take his yoke upon them. Could we, or would we, resist sin and satan, they could not hurt us. Every thing is weak and impotent, according to the distance it stands from God, who is the only fountain of life and power ; and therefore it was well resolved by the philosopher, sin, in itself, is a weak and impotent thing ; it consists not, properly, in any native power and strength which it hath within itself, but in an impotency and privation of all true perfection ; and therefore, where-soever any thing of God appears, it will destroy it. He that is born of God, shall overcome the world, the devil, and sin ; for “ the seed of God remaineth in him.”

Let us endeavour to get our minds enlightened with Divine truth, clear and practical truth ; let us earnestly endeavour after a true participation of the Divine nature, and then shall we find hell and death to flee away before us ; let us not impute the fruits of our own sluggishness to the power of the evil spirit without, or to God’s neglecting of us : say not, Who shall stand against those mighty giants ? No ; arm thyself with the mind of Christ, a fixed resolution to serve the will of the Almighty, and then fear not what sin and hell can do against thee. Open thy windows, thou sluggard, and let in the beams of Divine light that are waiting upon thee till thou awake out of thy slothfulness ; then shalt thou find the shadows of the night dispelled, and the warm beams of light and love enfolding thee, which the higher they arise upon thy soul, the more fully they will display their native beauty upon thee, transforming thee more and more from darkness to light, from the similitude of satan into a participation of the Divine image. The devil is not to be kept off from us by setting any spell about us, or driven away from us by any magical charms. We need not go and beat the air to drive away those evil spirits from about us ; but let us turn within ourselves, and beat down that pride and passion, those holds of satan there, which are therefore strong, because we oppose them weakly. Sin is

nothing else but a degeneration from true goodness, conceived by a dark and cloudy understanding, and brought forth by a corrupt will ; it hath no consistency in itself, or foundation of its own to support it. What the Jews have observed of error, is true of all sin, *Mendacium non habet pedes*, it hath no feet, no basis of its own to subsist and rest itself upon. Let us withdraw our will and affections from it, and it will soon fall into nothing. We ourselves uphold that kingdom of darkness, which else would tumble down into that nothing from whence it came. All truth and goodness are of an eternal nature, they are one and unchangeable, subsisting upon the strength of Omnipotency : but all sin and vice is our own creature ; we only give life to them which are our death, and would soon wither away, did we withdraw our concurrence from them.

Secondly, we have a further ground for our expectation of victory in all contests with sin and satan, “ from the powerful assistance of God himself,” who is never wanting to those that seek after him, and never fails those that engage in his quarrels. While we strive against sin, we may safely expect that the Divinity itself will strive with us, and derive that strength and power into us that shall at last make us more than conquerors. God hath not forsaken the earth : but as his Almighty Essence runs through all things, sustaining and upholding the frame of the whole universe ; so more especially does it bear up in its almighty arms those things that are more nearly related to himself. Wheresoever God beholds any breathings after himself, he gives life to them, as those which are his own breath in men. As he who projects wickedness, shall be sure to find satan standing at his right hand ready to assist him in it : so he that pursues after God and holiness, shall find God nearer to him than he is to himself, in the free and liberal communications of himself to him. He that goes out in God's battles, fighting under our Saviour's banner, may look upwards, and opening his eyes may see the mountains full of horses and chariots of fire round

about him. God hath not so much delight in the death and destruction of men as to see them struggling and contending for life, and himself standing by as a looker-on : no, but with the most tender and fatherly compassions his bowels yearn over them, and his Almighty arm is stretched forth for them ; and in his strength they shall prevail : they shall be borne up, as upon eagles' wings ; they shall walk in the might of his strength who is able to save, and not faint. Where there is any serious and sober resolution against sin, and real motion towards God, there is the blessing of heaven in it ; he that planted it will also water it, and make it to bud and blossom and bring forth fruit.

Wherfore to shut up this discourse, let us make use of this as a further argument to enforce the apostle's exhortation upon ourselves, " Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might ;" and, as the Psalmist speaks of his enemies, so let us say of our spiritual enemies, " They compass me about, they compass me in on every side ; but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them." Let us set ourselves, with all our might, to mortify the old man, and to crucify all the affections of the flesh : " Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and run with patience the race that is set before us ; looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," as a great and mighty conqueror, who will declare the perfection of his power in our weakness, if we lay hold of his strength. Though we are not able to change our own natures, or to rise above the source of our animal and selfish beings, by our own power ; yet let us endeavour to subdue all those external vices of luxury and wantonness, of injustice, revenge, and the like ; let us withdraw the fuel of our pride, malice, vain-glory, and whatsoever else holds us in captivity to hell, and with confidence apply ourselves to him who is an Almighty Saviour ; and when he joins his almighty strength with us, we need not fear any thing : he shall tread down satan

under our feet," and we shall one day "tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shall we trample under our feet :" we shall break the serpent's head, though he may bruise our heel. Though God may suffer him so far to serve his own rage, and the hellish malice of such as are in league with him, as to pull down with violence our earthly tabernacles ; yet while we so suffer by him, we are conquerors over him.

A
SERMON,
PREACHED
AT THE FUNERAL
OF
MR. JOHN SMITH,

Late Fellow of Queen's College in Cambridge;

*Who departed this Life, August 7, 1652, and lies interred
in the Chapel of the same College.*

BY SIMON PATRICK,
Then Fellow of the same College.

S E R M O N.

2 KINGS ii. 12.

*And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My Father, my Father,
the Chariot of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.*

WHEN I saw the blessed spirit of our brother, shall I say? or, our father, making haste out of that body which lies before us, these words, which I have now read, came into my mind: and methought my soul catched, as I fancied Elisha to have done at Elijah; and I cried out, “O my father, my father.” Desirous I was that I might have stayed the wheels of that triumphant chariot, wherein he seemed to be carried; that we might have kept him a little longer in this world, till, by his holy breathings into our souls, and the grace of God, we had been all made meet to have some share in that inheritance of the saints in light: and so he might have gone to heaven with his train, taking all his friends along with him as attendants to that glory wherewith I make no doubt he is crowned. It grieved me that there should be so many orphans left without a father, a society left naked without one of her best guardians, her very “chariot and horsemen;” unto whose instruction not a few of us will acknowledge that they owe much of their skill

and abilities. If he was not a prophet like Elijah, yet I am sure he was (as Gr. Nanzianzen, I think, speaks of St. Basil) “ an interpreter of the Spirit, a man sent down from heaven for our good, and is now gone thither from whence he came, leaving us behind him here, a company of poor fatherless children, the sons of this prophet, weeping and crying out, “ O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.”

Which sad note would have been most fitly sung at the ascension of his holy soul ; yet give me leave to descant a while upon it, now that we are come to inter his body, which was the dark shadow where that admirable learning, wisdom, and godliness, walked up and down and shone through upon the world.

You will easily see at the first glance, that something will here offer itself to be said of Elijah, and something of Elisha : of Elijah, in that he is called “ father, the chariot and horsemen of Israel ;” of Elisha, in that he applies this relation to himself, saying, “ *My* father, *my* father.”

Concerning Elijah we may observe, 1. His superiority, eminency, and dignity. 2. His singular care which he took of others. 3. His great usefulness.

Concerning Elisha we may observe three things likewise ; 1. His great affection. 2. The sense he felt of his great loss. 3. That honour which he gave him.

I shall speak a little of all these, and then parallel our case as well as I can to both.

1. Observe Elijah’s eminency, superiority, and dignity ; which is both signified in the word *father*, and also in the other expression, *the chariot and horsemen of Israel*. The Talmudists say that the word *Abba* is a word of honour and glory, even as *Rabbi* ; whence the Latin *Abbas*, and our English *Abbot*, have been derived, to denote the greatest person in a society. And therefore he whom he here calls *father*, is called, ver. 3 and 5, *master*, or *lord* ; “ Knowest thou not that Jchovah will take thy lord, or master, from thee to-day ?” Elijah was the head in the

body of the prophets, a leading man among the rest. And this was by reason of his wisdom, experience, and grey-headed understanding, expressed in the word *father*. He was a sage and grave person, such an head as was full of prudence, skill, and advice, wherein were moulded many sober resolutions, many weighty determinations, profound notions, holy and pious counsels for the teaching of greener heads. He was one that did imitate God, the Father of all, and in some sort represent him here below, being an oracle among them. And such instruments God hath always in the world, men of greater height and stature than others, whom he sets up as torches on an hill to give light to all the regions round about ; men of publick influence, like the sun itself which illuminates all, and is not sparing of its beams : men whose souls come into the world (as the Chaldee oracle speaks)

— πολὺν εσταμένατι γένος,

clothed with a great deal of mind, more impregnated than others with Divine notions, and having more teeming wombs to enrich the world with the fruit of them : men of wide and spacious souls that can grasp much ; and of enlarged and open hearts, to give forth that freely unto men which the Fatherly Mind (as the same oracle calls God) hath given unto them, that so in some sort they may become fathers in the world in subordination to God. The Sun of Righteousness, Jesus Christ, is described with seven stars in his right hand, Rev. i. which were the angels of the churches ; men, (it seems) who were adorned and beautified with more than ordinary brightness of mind and understanding, and sparkled with more than common heat of love and piety, and shone as lights in the world in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Elijah was such an one ; and so was the other Elias, John the Baptist, a burning and a shining light ; and so also shall we find our father that is deceased to have been.

2. Take notice of the care which Elijah took of Elisha,

and that first as a master of his scholar, and secondly as a father of his son. Elisha calls him by this name of father, because he was his scholar ; and they used commonly to give this title to their masters, or teachers. And so in the New Testament, that which is received by tradition from their fathers, signifies nothing else but what their doctors and learned men delivered to them ; and therefore they are sometimes called the traditions of the elders. Elijah taught and instructed him out of the law, but with such a care and fatherly affection, that Elisha was truly his son as well as his scholar, one whom he loved and tendered, whom he wrapped as a child in his mantle when he was following the plough, whom he begot into another shape and made another man, in whose heart he sowed the seeds of true righteousness and godliness, that he might do more good in the world. For what God doth by men, that they many times are said to do. Hence the apostles call Christians their little children, and dear children, whom they had “travailed in birth withal, till Christ was formed in them.” They lay in the apostles’ wombs, and they brought them forth Christians, and so were truly their spiritual fathers. And we may still see such noble souls which God continues amongst men, “whose mouths (as Solomon says) are as a well of life, whose lips feed many, and whose tongues are as choice silver :” men that are common fathers, and will embrace every body as a son, so they be but willing to be taught ; that have the whole world for their school, and are instilling wholesome notions and apprehensions into men’s minds, and implanting the truth which is after godliness in their hearts : men that in all meekness, tenderness, and fatherly affection reprove those that oppose themselves, that endeavour to bring them into their wombs, that (if it be possible) they may beget the life of God and of his Son Christ in their souls : men who cherish and foster the least gasping, panting life that is in any soul ; who endeavour to free this life from any obstructions that dull and oppress it : and so in every

sense prove themselves to be the true fathers of the church, common fathers, (as before I expressed it) neither bound up in themselves, nor addicted to any particular sect, but minding the good of all: who think that they were not born for themselves, nor to be linked to this or that party of men; but are to be "perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect," who doth good to all, even to the evil and unthankful. A natural affection there is in them, which makes them think that every man's child is their own; and if they could hatch any heavenly life in them, they would willingly cover them under their wings. Such a person was St. Paul, who went through fire and water, had a pilgrimage through this world upon nothing but briars and thorns, out of his great love that he bare to men: "The care of all the churches lay upon him; and no man could be weak, but he was weak also; no man was offended, but he burned :" and all this because he had the bowels of a father. Such another was St. John, who hath every where in his mouth, "My little children." A good old father he was who breathed forth nothing but love to man. And it need be no offence, if I add there was a Socrates in Athens, who had so much of this kind of spirit in him, that he styled himself "a servant of love," and professed that he knew nothing but how to love. He would often acknowledge himself to be an ignoramus in all those things whereinto their wise men used to inquire, but he durst not deny himself to have skill in that *ερωτικη τεχνη*, *in the art of love*, wherein he was continually employed; instructing their youth, amending their manners, and making them truly virtuous; which thing the ungrateful wretches of the city called corrupting their children. And truly it is very often the lot of these fathers, which I am speaking of, who nourish up youth in true piety and virtue, to be esteemed by many the corrupters of the fountain, pests rather than fathers of the places where they live. But they fare no worse than Elijah did, who was accounted the troubler of Israel, though he was the chariot and horsemen thereof; a man

so useful, that they could not tell how to want him, though they knew not how to value him.

3. We have here observable the usefulness of Elijah; he was not only a father, but the chariot and horsemen of Israel, the security and safeguard of the place where he was. He calls him by this name in an allusion to the chariot wherein he was fetched to heaven, and would express, by this form of speech, the good service he did for Israel. He was instead of an army to them, like David, worth ten thousand of the people. He alone was able to fight with all their enemies, and by his force to break all their legions in pieces. And indeed all good men, especially men of extraordinary wisdom and godliness, are the guard and defence of the towns where they reside, yea of the country whereof they are members. They are the tutelar angels of a nation, men that can do more by their prayers and tears, their virtuous and holy actions, than an host of men, wherein none is of less valour than Sampson. How had it been with Israel, had it not been for Moses, the meekest man on earth, and yet “terrible as an army with banners?” And in what a case had Samaria often been, if it had not been for this Elisha, the son of Elijah, who was encompassed about with chariots and horses of fire to fight at his command? What if I say of such men in the Platonists’ phrase, that they are *φυλακες της κοσμου*, *the keepers of the world*, that preserve it from being made like to Sodom and Gomorrah? And if there had been but ten of these holy champions there, they had shielded their heads from the arrows of the Almighty, and kept the showers of fire and brimstone from being rained upon them. Good men are the life-guards of the world; next to God and good angels, they are the walls and bulwarks of a nation; for “by their strength they have power with God,” as it is said of Jacob. And so the Chaldee paraphrast reads these words of my text, “Thou wast better to Israel by thy prayers than chariot and horsemen.” They are the glory of the world, and without them it would be but a rude rabble, a beast

with many heads and no brains, a mere chaos and confusion. And it is by reason of them that it doth not run into such disorder as a company of children would do without their father, or a multitude of mad soldiers without their skilful leader and commander.

And so I have briefly set before you what Elijah was, what those who are eminent for godliness are, what every good man ought in some measure to be, and what you shall shortly hear our deceased father was in an high degree: men of worth and great renown, (in a good sense) men of name, men that may be taken notice of in the world, and shine by their wisdom, justice, and goodness, that cheer the world by their love and fatherly care of all, that heartily endeavour to do good, and would not for a world see men perish if they could help it; in a word, men that are as the soul of the world, without whom it would be a stinking and unsufferable place.

2. Now let us look a while upon Elisha, and see what he thought of such a man. And,

1. We meet with his great affection expressed in the very form of the words, “ My father, my father ! ” Me-thinks I feel within myself with what pure, dear, and ardent love he spake these words; what a glowing fire there was in his breast when he thought of his spiritual father. He burnt in love to him, as if some spark had fallen from Elijah’s fiery chariot into his heart. He was all in a desire, as if the angels that fetched his father had lent him a waft of their wings, whereby he strove to fly with him to heaven. There is not a child that can cry more after the breasts that gave it suck, and the arms of her that carried it in her womb, than he calls and cries after his father, “ O my father, my father ! where shall I find my father ? what will become of me without my father ? ” A tender love there is to be in our hearts to all men, of what nature or nation soever; no man ought to be a lover of himself, but a lover of mankind: yet a more singular cleaving of souls there should be to those that are good; but the most unspeakable and greatest

union to those by whom we have profited in wisdom and godliness, and whose lips have dropped the word of life into our minds. For, as Solomon hath it, “There is gold, and a multitude of rubies; but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.” We should stand affected to them as the Galatians to St. Paul, who would have pulled out their very eyes, and given them unto him. They ought to be to us dearer than our eyes: by which speech God expresses his extraordinary love to his people Israel, saying that he kept them “as the apple of his eye.” And indeed it can scarce be otherwise but that there should be an unknown love between such persons, there being such a secret fascination in frequent converse and familiarity, as entices a man’s soul and heart out of himself. Those precepts which we imbibe from another’s mouth, naturally call forth a strong affection to him; and he who inflames our souls with love to God, will certainly enkindle a subordinate love in us to himself. The words of wisdom smite an ingenuous soul as with a dart, (if I may use Greg. Thaumaturgus’s expression concerning Origen’s discourses) and cannot but wound it both with a love to wisdom and him that shoots those piercing arrows into his heart. They bind a tractable soul, as it were, in indissoluble necessities, so that it cannot but love those words, and kiss the mouth also from whence they flow unto it. A teachable mind will hang about a wise man’s neck, and thereby they come to cleave as fast together as the soul of Jonathan did unto the soul of David. So the aforesaid Gregory speaks of himself and Origen, “This David (meaning Origen) hath entangled and bound up my soul in such necessary fetters of love, he hath so tied and knit me to him, that if I would be disengaged, I cannot quit myself: no, though we depart out of this world, our love cannot die; for I love him even as my own soul; and so my affection must remain for ever.” “The words of the wise (saith Solomon) are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of the assemblies,” Eccles. xii. 11. If a master fix his doctrine in his scholars’ mind, he nails

himself likewise with the same stroke, *quasi trabali clavo*, by a pin as strong as a beam, to his scholar's heart : they mingle souls as they do notions, and mutually pass into each other.

2. We have here likewise the sense which Elisha had of his great loss. For these words are expressions of sorrow and lamentation, as appears by the words following ; “ And he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in pieces :” and also from chap. xiii. 14, where we find Joash weeping over this Elisha, and saying these very words of my text, “ O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen ther eof.” And methinks I see Elisha himself here bedewing his cheeks with tears, and hear these words sighed out of his heart, having lost his dear father, one that took such special care of him whilst he was in the world. Methinks I see his heart rent as well as his garments, and there I see Elijah graven in letters as great as was his love. How could he look on himself and not lament to think that he had lost his head ? How could he behold Israel unguarded, and not throw off his own clothes as a token of his sorrow ? The just shall be had in everlasting remembrance, they shall die desired ; and those who can value them, will not let them pass away in silence and with dry eyes. No tears are spent so well as for the want of God and a good friend, or a good man, especially such a one as I before described. And indeed who can think of his gracious lips, his profitable and delightful converse, his cordial love, without a sigh and a tear, without saying, “ Ah my father, ah his glory !” No man will be sooner missed than such an one as he : ten thousand others may steal out of the world, and no body scarce mind or inquire after them ; but let Elijah go away, and you shall have fifty men go three days to seek him, that if it be possible they may enjoy his company a while longer. We find that Jesus himself wept for his friend Lazarus, John xi. 35, at which the Jews said, “ Behold how he loved him !” Two souls joined together in cordial love cannot part without a groan,

especially a son and his father, a scholar and his master. The child cannot hold from crying, when it wants the breast that used to feed it ; nor can a soul so thirsty of knowledge but be pained, when the fountain is stopped that used to quench it. There are not so many of these men in the world but their loss will be as soon felt as the want of a buttress against a bowing wall. He who knows one to have been a light in the world and a lamp unto him, will surely be sad, when he sees that light go out, and himself left in the dark, without that φίλον φως, those cheerful and beloved beams which used to shine upon him, to illuminate and warm his soul with a true knowledge and love of all real goodness.

3. We may further take notice of the honourable thoughts he had of Elijah, of the reverence and respect which he gave unto him. For so we may look upon these words as an expression of the high esteem he had of him, and regard he bare to him, even after he was gone from this earth, and could do no more kindnesses for him. Elisha, who had been a minister to him when below, and used to pour water upon his hands, could not but have very reverend thoughts towards him now the angels came to wait upon him, and in flames of fire to carry him up above. He could not but honour him as his elder and father, as his leader and commander, as the general of the sons of the prophets, as the very host and army of Israel. And indeed the souls of those men that are as full of God as the name of Elijah is, (which includes two, if not three, of the Divine names in it,) cannot but draw our eyes toward them ; but then they so dazzle us with their lustre and brightness, they strike us into such amazement at their perfections, that the weakness of man's nature hath been apt to give no less than Divine veneration to such persons. It had not been lawful, I know, to have worshipped Elijah, though he had been an angel; but yet methinks I see Elisha bowing down with some respect to the very mantle which fell from his master. And I could very well pass some

civility upon the gown in which the holy man departed used to walk. There was so much of Divinity enshrined in this excellent man's soul, that it made every thing to have a kind of sacredness in it, and will make his name to be always as a sweet odour unto us.

And so I am fallen unawares in my meditations upon the application of what hath been said to him that is deceased.

Some perhaps will be angry that I should go about to compare him with Elijah, the man of God; but I have an apology ready at hand: they will giye me leave, I hope, to do the same that Greg. Nyssen doth, who, in his oration at the funeral of his brother Basil, compares him not only with Elias, but with John the Baptist, the second Elias. Suffer me then to use some of his words concerning him of whom we are now to speak. “None will require of human nature to imitate Elijah in his shutting and opening of heaven, in his fasting so many days, and his going up to God in a fiery chariot; but in other things we will be bold to compare him with that great man, in his zealous faith, in his cordial love to God, in his earnest desire and thirst after that which truly is, in an exact and exquisite life, in a conversation so studied that it was in all things consonant with itself, in most unaffected gravity, wonderful simplicity, and a countenance proportionable to the vigour and strength of his soul, or, in his own words, he had Βλεμμα τω τον της Ψυχης Κυλενομενον, a look that was not one key below his intent, and eager, and sprightly mind. If you look upon his care of those things that were hoped for, and neglect of these things that are seen, on his equal love to poor and rich; in these, and such like things, he imitated the wonders of Elijah.”

But that I may proceed in this argument according to our former method,—

1. Let us first look upon him in his eminency, dignity, and worth. A very glorious star he was, and shone brighter in our eyes, than any that he ever looked upon,

when he took his view of the heavenly bodies ; and now he shines as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever ; being wise, and having turned many (I believe,) unto righteousness.

I shall speak nothing of his earthly parentage, save only this, that herein he was like to John the Baptist, the last Elias, in that he was born, after his parents had been long childless, and were grown aged. Some have observed, that such have proved very famous ; for they seem to be sent on purpose by God into the world, to do good, and to be scarce begotten by their parents. Such are something like Isaac, who had a great blessing in him, and seemed to be intended by God for some great service in the world.

But let us look only at his heavenly descent, and see how he was allied to God himself ; for, as the poet says of Æneas,

—*Contingit sanguine Cælum.*

I may say of him, as Nazianzen says of his sister, “ His country was heaven, his town or city was the Jerusalem which is above, his fellow-citizens were the saints, his nobility was the retaining of the Divine impressions and stamps upon his soul ; and, being like to God, the archetype and first pattern of all goodness : ” and indeed the preserving the heavenly symbols that are in our souls, and especially the purging them from the corruption of nature, he often spake of ; and his endeavour was, that the Divine image might be fairly reflected in him, and that it might shine brightly in the face of others.

If I should speak much of the vastness of his learning, it would seem to say, that I knew all he was ; which I am not so arrogant as to assume unto myself : this I will say, that he could do what he would. He had such a huge, wide capacity of soul, such a sharp and piercing understanding, such a deep, reaching mind, that he set himself about nothing but he soon grasped it, and made

himself a full possessor of it ; and if we consider his great industry, and indefatigable pains, his Herculean labours day and night, from his first coming to the university, till the time of his long sickness, joined with his large parts, and his frequent meditation, contemplation, and abstraction of his mind from sensible things, it must needs be concluded, that he was a comprehensor of more than I can say or think of ; and, if I could, it would be too tedious to give you an account of all.

There is a discourse which Charidemus (in Chrysostome,) makes to his friends a little before his death : “ That this world is God’s house, wherin a sumptuous feast is prepared, and all men are his guests ; that there are two waiters at the table, which fill out the wine to them that call for it; the one a man, the other a woman; the one called *Nos*, or *mind*, from whose hand all wise men drink ; the other, *Ἀκεραία*, or *intemperance*, who fills the cups of the lovers of this world.” In this house our beloved friend, deceased, stayed between four and five and thirty years, and, I am sure, drank most large draughts from the hand of the former ; for he was a man, he was a mind, he had nothing of that woman in him, and never in the least was known to sip of her cups. He was a most laborious searcher after wisdom, and never gave his flesh the leisure to please itself in those entertainments ; and therefore we may be confident with that Charidemus, that God hath taken him to be his *Συμπότην καὶ εταίρον*, *his friend and companion*, to drink of the rivers of his pleasure. In a word, he was, as Eunapius speaks of Longinus, a living library, and a walking study. I never got so much good, among all my books, by a whole day’s plodding in a study, as by an hour’s discourse I have got with him ; for he was not a library locked up, nor a book clasped, but stood open, for any to converse with that had a mind to learn ; yea, he was a fountain running over, labouring to do good to those who, perhaps, had no mind to receive it. None more free and communicative than he was, to such as desired

to discourse with him, nor would he grudge to be taken off from his studies upon such an occasion. It may be truly said of him, that a man might always come better from him ; and his mouth could drop sentences as easily as an ordinary man's could speak sense ; and he was no less happy in expressing his mind, than in conceiving ; wherein he seems to have excelled the famous philosopher Plotin, of whom Porphyry tells us, that he was something careless of his words, but was wholly taken up in his mind. He, of whom we now speak, had such a plenty of words, and those so full, pregnant, and significant, joined with such an active fancy, as is very rarely to be found in the company of such a deep understanding.

I have done with his learning, when I have told you, that, as he looked upon honours, riches, and the eagerly-pursued things of this world, as vanities, so did he look upon this also, as a piece, though a more excellent piece, of vanity (as he was wont to phrase it,) if compared with the higher and more Divine accomplishments of the soul : for he did not value himself by any of those things which were of a perishing nature, which should fail, and cease, and vanish away ; but only by those things which were solid and substantial, of a Divine and immortal nature, which he might carry out of the world with him.

He was of a very singular wisdom and great prudence ; of admirable skill and readiness in the managing of affairs, which I make an account, is an imitation of that providence of God that governs the world. His learning was so concocted, that it lay not as an idle notion in his head, but made him fit for any employment. He was very full and clear in all his resolutions at any debates ; a most wise counsellor in any difficulties ; dexterous in untying any knot ; of great judgment in satisfying any scruple in matters of religion. He was one that soon saw into the depth of any business that was before him, and looked it quite through ; that would presently turn it over and over in his mind, and see it on all sides ; and he understood things so well, at the first sight, that he did not

often need second thoughts, but usually stood to the present resolution and determination of his mind.

Add to this, his known integrity, uprightness, and faithfulness ; his strong and lively, his waking and truly-tender conscience ; which, joined with the former things I spoke of, made him more than a man,

—οὐαὶ νῦν βροτοὶ εἰσι, as men now go. He was (as one of the ancients speaks) an exemplar of true Christian philosophy and virtue ; and, as it were the spiritual rule, line, and square thereof. Of so poised and even a life, that by his wisdom and conscience (were it not that every man should know for himself) one might live almost at a venture, walking blindfold through the world, and not miscarry.

He had incorporated, shall I say, or insouled all principles of justice and righteousness, and made them one with himself ; so that I may say of him in Antoninus's phrase, he was δικαιοσυνὴ βελαμμενὸς βαθος, dipped into justice, as it were, over head and ears. He had not a slight superficial tincture, but was dyed and coloured quite through with it : they who knew him, very well know the truth of all this. And I am persuaded he did as heartily and cordially, as eagerly and earnestly, do what appeared to be just and right, without any self-respect or particular reflections, as any man living.

Methinks I see how earnest he would be in a good matter, which appeared to be reasonable and just, as though justice herself had been in him, looking out at his eyes, and speaking at his mouth : it was a virtue indeed that he had a great affection to, and which he was very zealous to maintain.

But he was always very urgent among us, that by the grace of God, and the help of the mighty Spirit of Jesus Christ working in us, we would endeavour to purge out the corruption of our natures, and to crucify the flesh, with all the affections and lusts thereof ; yea, to subdue, as much as was possible, even those first motions that are without our consent, and to labour after purity of

heart, that so we might see God ; for his endeavour was not only to be out of the pollutions of the world, through lust, but to come to the true likeness of God and his Son ; or, in the apostle's language, to be partaker of the Divine nature. And here, now, what words shall I use ?

What shall I say of his love ? None, that knew him well, but might see in him love bubbling and springing up in his soul, and flowing out to all : and that love unfeigned, without guile, hypocrisy, or dissimulation. I cannot tell you how his soul was universalized, how tenderly he embraced all God's creatures in his arms, more especially men, and principally those in whom he beheld the image of his heavenly Father. There one might have seen running, like to like, and he would have emptied his soul into theirs.

His patience was no less admirable than his love, under a lingering and tedious disease ; wherein he never murmured nor complained, but rested quietly satisfied in the unbounded goodness and tenderness of his Father, and the commisserations of Jesus Christ, our merciful High Priest, " who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities." He still resolved with Job, " though he kill me, yet will I trust in him." And he told me, in his sickness, that he hoped he had learned that for which God sent it ; and that he thought God kept him so long under such pressures, that patience might have its perfect work." His sickness, undoubtedly, was *φιλοσοφος νοσος*, (as Nazi-anzen speaks), a learned disease, and full of true philosophy, which taught him more of real Christianity, and made his soul of a more strong, able, athletic habit and temper; for, as St. James saith, " If patience have its perfect work," then is a soul " perfect and entire, wanting nothing." And really in his sickness, he shewed what Christianity is able to do ; what might, power, and virtue there is in it, to bear up a soul under the greatest loads ; and that he could through Christ strengthening him, do all that which he so admirably discoursed of in his life.

But his humility was that which was most conspicuous ; you might have beheld in him true humility in a most eminent degree ; and the more eminent, considering how much there was within him, which would have puffed up another. From his first admission into the university, he sought not great things for himself, but was contented in the condition wherein he was. He made not haste to rise, as youths are apt to do ; but proceeded leisurely, by orderly steps, not to what he could get, but to what he was fit to undertake. He staid God's time of advancement, with all industry and pains following his studies ; as if he rather desired to deserve honour than to be honoured. He shook off all idleness and sloth, the bane of youth, and so had the blessing of God upon his endeavours, who gave him great encouragement from divers persons of worth, and at last brought him unto this place. Lowness of mind made him a true disciple of Jesus Christ, who took upon him the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation ; and I dare say our dear friend was as true to the good of mankind as any person who this day lives. This was his design in his studies, and if it had pleased the Lord of life to have prolonged his days, it would have been more of his work ; for he was resolved (as he once told me) to lay aside other studies, and to travel in the salvation of men's souls, after whose good he most ardently thirsted.

Shall I add above, or unto all these, his faith ; I say, his true, lively, and working faith, his simple, plain-hearted, naked faith in Christ ? It is likely that it did not busy itself about many fine notions, subtleties, and curiosities, or believing whole volumes ; but be sure it was that which was firmly fixed in the mercy of God through Christ ; that also which brought down Christ into his soul ; which drew down heaven into his heart ; which sucked in life and strength continually from our Saviour ; which made him hearty, serious, and constant in all Christian virtues. His faith was not without a soul ; but what Isidore saith of faith and works, held true of him, *καὶ*

απο τετων αυτην Φυχεσθαι. His faith was animated, quickened, and actuated by these. It made him godlike, and he lived by faith in the Son of God ; by it he came to be truly a partaker of the righteousness of Christ, and had it wrought and formed in his very soul. For this indeed was the end of his life, the design which he carried on, that he might become like to God. So that if one should have asked him that question in Antoninus, “ What is thy art and profession, thy business and employment ? He would not have answered, To be a great philosopher, mathematician, historian, or hebrician (in all which he was in great eminency), to be a physician, lawyer, general linguist ; which names and many more his general skill deserved : but he would have answered, as he doth there, My art is to be good ; to be a true Divine is my care and business, or, in the Christian phrase, “ To be holy as God is holy, to be perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect.” All that remember the serious behaviour and weighty expressions he used in his prayers, cannot but call to mind how much his heart was set upon the attainment of this true goodness.

I have transgressed too much my bounds, now it is so late ; yet I hope I should not weary you, if I should discourse upon his ingenuity, his courtesy, his gentleness and sweetness, with many other things of the like nature. And let me say thus much, that he was far from that spirit of devouring zeal that now too much rages. He would rather have been consumed in the service of men, than have called for fire down from heaven, to consume them. And therefore though Elijah excelled him in this, that he ascended up to heaven in a fiery chariot ; yet herein I may say he was above the spirit of Elijah, that he called for no fire to descend from heaven upon men, but the fire of Divine love that might burn up all their hatred, roughness, and cruelty to each other. But as for benignity of mind and Christian kindness, every body that knew him will ever remember that he ever had their names in his mouth, and they were no less in his heart and life ; as

knowing without these, truth itself is a faction, and Christ is drawn into a party. And this graciousness of spirit was the more remarkable in him, because he was of a temper naturally hot and choleric, as the greatest minds most commonly are. He was wiser than to let any anger rest in his bosom ; much less did he suffer it to burn and boil until it was turned into gall and bitterness.

If he were at any time moved unto anger, it was but a sudden flushing in his face, and it did as soon vanish as arise : and it used to arise upon no such occasions as I now speak of. No, whensoever he looked upon the fierce and consuming fires that were in men's souls, it made him *sad*, not angry ; and it was his constant endeavour to inspire men's souls with more benign and kindly hearts, that they might warm but not scorch their brethren.

And from this spirit, together with the rest of Christian graces that were in him, there did result a great serenity, quiet, and tranquillity in his soul, which dwelt so much above, that it was not shaken with any of those tempests and storms which use to unsettle more low and abject minds. He lived in a continued sweet enjoyment of God, and so was not disquieted with scruples or doubts of his salvation. There was always discernible in him a cheerful sense of God's goodness, which ceased not in the time of sickness. But we most longed to see the motions of his soul, when he drew near the centre of his rest. He that had such a constant feeling of God within him, we might conclude would have the most strong and powerful sense when he came nearer to a close conjunction with him. But God was pleased to deny this to us ; and by a lethargic distemper which seized on his spirits, he passed the six last days of his life in a kind of sleep, and without taking much notice of any thing, he slept in the Lord.

And now have we not reason to be so sad, as you see our faces tell you that we are ? But, alas ! half of that is

not told you which your eyes might have seen, had you been acquainted with him. I want thoughts and words to make a lively portraiture of him. My young experience hath not seen to the height or the depth of these things which I have here given you a rude draught of; and so my expressions must fall far below that excellent degree of beauty wherein they dwelt in him. Let it suffice therefore to say, (that I may keep to the word in the text,) that he was truly a “father,” that he wanted age only to make him reverend; and that if he had lived many generations ago, and left us the children of his mind to posterity, he might by this time have been numbered among the fathers of the church.

I have almost prevented myself in the two latter particulars, his singular care, and his great usefulness; both which must needs be concluded from the former. His care, I say, of others, as a tutor, his usefulness as a fellow of this now mournful society. Let me speak a word or two of each.

2. All his pupils began to know in his sickness what it was to have and to want a loving father, a faithful tutor. He was one that instilled such excellent pious notions into their minds, and gave such light in every thing a man could desire to know, that I could have been content, though in this gown, to have been his pupil. His life taught them continual lessons of justice, temperance, prudence, fortitude, and masculine virtue; and above all, he taught them true dependance upon God, and reference of themselves and all their studies unto him; with true faith in, and imitation of, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: for which end he often expounded to them out of the holy Scriptures. And for human learning, the many good scholars that came from under his hand witness how dextrous he was at training up youth in all good literature. Those that come hither are in a manner without father and mother; but they could not be committed to a more loving tutor, a more holy and faithful guardian,

that would bring them up in all true learning and piety. If any think he was too severe, let me tell them that they are such as find fault with the lion, because he looks not like an ape, but with a stern, royal, and kingly countenance. He both looked and spake like a man that had drawn into his soul such solid, high, and generous principles as few men are acquainted with, which made him very zealous not only for righteousness, integrity, and holiness, but for a decorum in all things. He had a great regard for all those things which are mentioned by the apostle, Philip. iv. 8, for "whatsoever things were true, honest," (or rather comely and grave, seemly and venerable,) for all that was "just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there was any praise, or any virtue," he was most earnest and forward in its behalf.

3. And now what his usefulness was, and the benefit we received by him, all that bear any share in the government of this society will be made to know by the want of him. There is not one but will cry out with Elisha, "O the chariot of this place, and the horsemen thereof;" which words seem to express what a necessary man Elias was, which we may use concerning him that is now dead, our great glory, the pillar upon whose shoulders the weight of business of late lay. O, thou wast both my safeguard and my ornament! who wast a society by thyself, a college in brief, what a loss have we sustained by thy departure! That must not be resolved by me, nor by any one single person of us, but we must all lay our heads together to tell our loss. To which of us was not he dear? Who is there that was not engaged to him? Who can think himself as wise as he was when we had him?

And this our high and dear esteem of him when he was with us, leads me to speak of that honour and reverence which we all express to his name, that affection which is in our hearts to his memory, the sense that is in us of our great and unspeakable loss; in answer to those three

foregoing considerations about Elisha. But here I must be very brief. There are none that knew his worth but honour his very dust. And, for my part, I honour him so much, that I wish we might do as the virgins of Israel did for Jephthah's daughter, come once a year hither and lament his death; and so at once we might express all these three, our respect, affection, and sense of our loss. And whensoever we commemorate his love to us, let it be with some encomium: let us mourn that we are deprived of such a person; but let us rejoice and give thanks to God that we ever had such an one who hath done us so much good.

But let me tell you, in conclusion of all, that herein would be shewn our greatest love and affection to him, this would be the greatest honour of him, if we would express his life in ours, that others might say when they behold us, There walks at least a shadow of Mr. Smith. And O that I might beg with Elisha a double portion among those that I desire should share in the gifts and graces of this Elijah. This is the highest of my ambition, that many might but possess the riches that lodged in this one. They disgrace their master who have not skill in that which they say he professed; but they who tread in his steps, and excel in his art, shine back again upon him from whom first they received their light. Let me seriously therefore exhort every one of us to imitate this master in Israel. Imitate him in his industry, if not in his learning; shake off all laziness and sloth; do not embody and enervate your souls by idleness and base neglect; do no emasculate them and turn them into flesh by drowsiness or vain pleasures. Imitate his temperance, his patience, his fortitude, his candour and ingenuity, his holiness and righteousness, his faith and love, his charity and humility, his self-denial and true self-resignation to the will of God: in a word, all those Christian virtues which lived in him, let them live in us for ever. Let us die to the world, as he did, before we die: let us separate

our souls from our bodies and all bodily things, before the time of our departure and separation come. Let us take an especial heed lest, as most men do, we suffer this lower and earthly world ; lest we be drawn forcibly into its embraces, and so held from rising aloft. But let us turn our minds continually to heaven, and earnestly desire *pati Deum, to suffer God* ; to be mightily and strongly attracted by him from all earthly and sensible delights to an admiration and love of his everlasting beauty and goodness. Let us labour to be so well acquainted with him, and all things of the higher world, and so much disengaged in our affections from this and all that is in it, that when we come to go out of this world, we may never look back and say, O what goodly things do I leave ! What a brave world am I snatched from ! Would I might but live a little longer here ! Let us get our hearts so crucified to the world, that it may be an easy thing to us to bid a farewell to our friends, (the dearest things we have) our lands, houses, goods, and whatsoever is valuable in our eyes. Let us use the world as though we used it not : let us die daily, as our dear friend did ; and so it was easy to him to die at last. Dic, did I say ? Shall I use that word, or rather, he is flown away, his soul hath got loose, and now feels her wings ; or, he hath changed his habitation, he is gone into the other world, as Abraham went out of Ur into Canaan ; he hath taken his journey into another country a little before his body ? He hath left his body behind him a while to take a sleep in the dust, and when it awakes at the resurrection, it shall follow also to the same place. Then shall it be made a spiritual body, then shall it have wings given to it also, and be lovingly married again to the soul, never more to suffer any separation. And at that time we shall all meet with our dear father and friend again, who are now crying out, “ O my father, my father ! ” Then shall all tears be wiped away from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be

any more pain. Then we shall not need such a light as he was ; “ for there is no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever. Amen.

END OF VOL. XI.

